

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

A standard linear barcode is located in the top left corner of the white sticker. It consists of vertical black lines of varying widths on a white background.

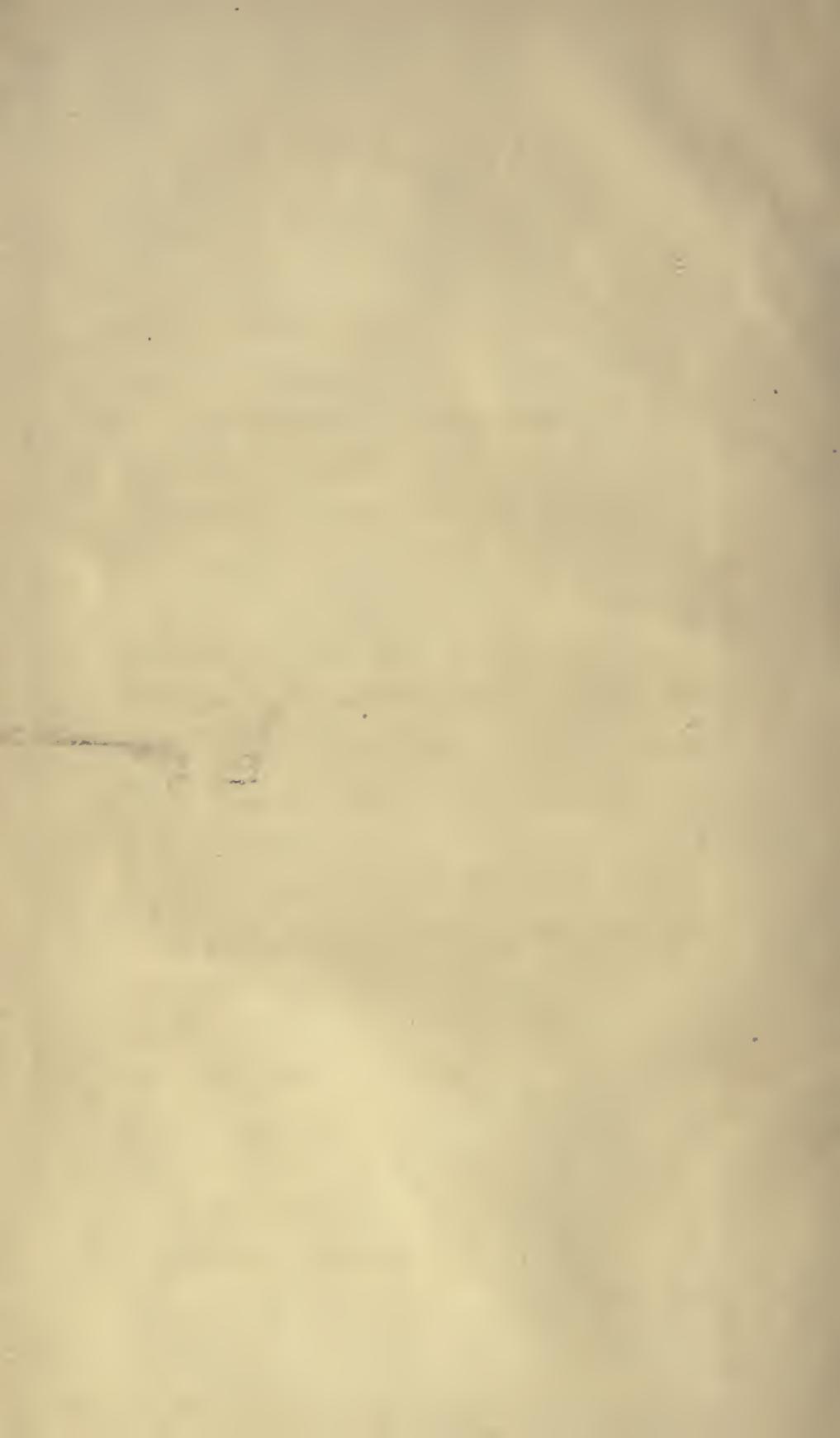
3 1761 01001146 8

UNIV. OF  
TORONTO  
LIBRARY



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation





# VINDICATION

OF

## EUROPE

AND

## GREAT BRITAIN

FROM

*MISREPRESENTATION and ASPERSION.*

EXTRACTED AND TRANSLATED

FROM

MR. GENTZ'S ANSWER TO MR. HAUTERIVE.

---

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOHN STOCKDALE, PICCADILLY.

1803.

---

Price Two Shillings and Sixpence.

129025  
6/8/13

S. GOSNELL, Printer,  
Little Queen Street, Holborn;

## P R E F A C E.

---

THE attention of the public has of late been frequently called to Mr. Hauterive's pamphlet, or book, as, from its size and consequence, it may more properly be called. As that gentleman enjoys an official situation under the French government, there arises a strong presumption that he would publish no work, except under the sanction of their approbation. Suppose a Secretary of the Treasury in this country, or a confidential friend of the Minister, were to deliver an opinion of its state, or to suggest any new scheme of continental alliances, or to call the attention of Europe to the situation of France; he would be considered, and properly considered, as the organ of the ministerial opinion. But no doubt could remain on the subject, if all the papers and journals more immediately under the influence of Government were to admit its principles, praise the performance, and by every possible effort assist its circulation at home and abroad.

This has been literally the case in France, and it comes, therefore, little short of a moral certainty, that the sentiments of that author may be regarded as the sentiments of the French government, as their rules of action and principles of conduct. The work derives from this consideration a consequence, to which it would otherwise not be entitled. But this consequence is exalted into greater magnitude, when, on a closer inquiry, we find that government acting systematically upon the maxims he has established, and the doctrines he has elucidated.

Under this view it has appeared to me a little surprising, that it has not been particularly noticed by any of our political writers, more especially as it has not wanted the advantage of an English dress, to recommend it to attention and naturalize its pretensions amongst us. For, however we may please ourselves with considering that our insular situation exempts us from the dangers to which the continent stands exposed; these new principles and doctrines reach us in the very heart of our retired situation, and strike at the existence of our naval pre-eminence and our commercial opulence. Often in terms direct, sometimes in covert language, we find all Europe in-

vited to a general confederation, by which trade may be withdrawn from our ports, and the triumphant flag of the sea wrested out of our hands.

A foreign writer has done that most ably which has been in vain expected from an English pen; and which in a fit of despair I might have attempted myself, if Mr. Gentz's work had not fallen into my hands. By him the subject has been in all its parts so fully and so fairly discussed, with such complete information and such resistless argument, that his work may be considered as a most complete refutation of Mr. Hauterive's doctrine.

It remains to inform the reader what use I have made of this excellent performance. Whatever has a reference to continental politics, or may be considered as a vindication of Europe from the unjust charges exhibited against it, I have endeavoured to analyze with care, and present with fidelity: I flatter myself I shall be readily believed, when I observe, that I should have found translation a less difficult undertaking than the present analyfis.

All that more immediately respects the vindication of this country, has been fully translated;

and if I have done justice to the original author, there will be but one opinion of the goodness of his cause, and the ability with which it is supported.

Perhaps what is at all times interesting, may be rendered highly so by the actual state of public affairs ; and the present undertaking may receive an additional value from the activity with which the theories of Mr. Hauerive are at this period ripening into practice.

C. P.

# CONTENTS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

<i>Consideration of the Causes to which the Destruction of the System of public Right is falsely ascribed</i>	Page 9
---	--------

## CHAPTER II.

<i>Proofs, from the actual State of Europe, that there existed a general System of Improvement</i>	26
--	----

## CHAPTER III.

<i>Refutation of the supposed political Grievances of England</i>	—	—	37
---	---	---	----

## CHAPTER IV.

<i>Refutation of the supposed commercial or economical Grievances of England</i>	—	—	77
--	---	---	----

## CHAPTER V.

<i>View of the State of France since the Revolution, and the Alliances she has contracted, and is dis- posed to contract</i>	—	—	126
--	---	---	-----



---

---

A

# VINDICATION,

&c.

---

---

## CHAP. I.

*Consideration of the Causes to which the Destruction  
of the System of public Right is falsely ascribed.*

AT the time when the French revolution broke out, there subsisted, according to Mr. Hauterive, no system of public right in Europe, no federative principles. Such as had been known were established by the treaty of Westphalia; but three causes arose, which eventually dissolved these public bonds. These were, 1st, The formation of the Russian empire; 2dly, The elevation of Prussia to a place among the powers of the first rank; and 3dly, Its prodigious extension of the colonial and maritime system. The war against France may be considered as the result of this general anarchy; and its termination has placed her in a situation adapted to her own and the general interest of Europe. She will now be

able to form a new federative system, to institute a new code of public right, and to place each power in its proper rank and station. Her allies shall be treated with kindness, her enemies with moderation, and the neutral states with impartiality. More particularly she offers herself as a barrier against that overbearing power, which has been the source of all the woes of Europe, and which, if not confined within proper bounds, will not only perpetually disturb the repose of other nations, but will stifle their industry and subdue their independence.

Such is the object of Mr. Hauterive's work, such the points he with great earnestness and ingenuity labours to prove. The attention of the reader is therefore first called by Mr. Gentz to these necessary preliminary discussions ; What was the real nature of the treaty of Westphalia ? and what the real operations and tendency of the three causes, to which the dissolution of the federative system is ascribed.

Though there most undoubtedly did subsist at the epoch of the French revolution, a true and efficacious system of public right, it is ascribing too much to the treaty of Westphalia to argue that it was founded or established by it. In fact, it had no material effect on Europe in general.

Among the powerful states three only took a direct part in this treaty—Austria, France, and Sweden. Spain refused to accede to it. England

was not so much as mentioned in it. Denmark, Poland, and the Italian States, had little interest in it. Some of the more important arrangements, such as the independence of Switzerland, and the United Provinces, were merely formal and complementary ; since the destiny of those states had been for a considerable time completely decided. Many treaties of peace, less celebrated, have had a more sensible operation on the changes of territory and government, and produced greater revolutions on the general system of politics.

Its proper merit is confined principally to Germany. It settled the hitherto fluctuating pretensions of the Emperor and the co-estates, ascertained the jurisdictions of the respective sovereignties, limited the competence of the tribunals of the Empire, and settled the religious disputes which had so long divided the country. Another great general advantage arose from its ascertaining the compensations to be made to France ; and if that has not rested a fundamental law, no blame will attach to Germany. There are therefore two views under which the events alluded to must, by the political reader, be principally considered, as affecting the internal state of Germany, and the connexions and relations subsisting between France and that country.

The first cause is the formation of the Russian empire. The introduction of knowledge and civilization into countries ignorant and barbarous,

is not only a particular, but a general blessing. It multiplies the points of contact amongst men, it extends the sphere of their relations and activity, and opens a new field to industry, commerce, and the communication of ideas. Under this consideration the civilization of Russia may be deemed, next to the discovery of America, the most important event of modern history. It may be further regarded as a new bond of connexion between Europe and Asia. It has opened to us the interior of that country, and affords the consoling prospect of restoring that cradle of the human race to the participation of those common blessings, from which it has been so long excluded. Lastly, it has secured Europe from the danger of any future irruption of barbarous nations, a danger of which many enlightened politicians have admitted the possibility. So much for the favourable side of the question.

On the contrary, the formation of this new power has rendered the relations of other states more complicated and negotiations more difficult. It has offered food and aliment to that restless activity, which seems the distinguishing characteristic of the age. Often has the desire of exerting an immediate influence on other powers led the sovereigns of Russia to the adoption of such measures as have struck the inferior states with alarm for their very existence, and the more powerful ones with the dread of seeing the political equilibrium of Europe totally destroyed.

Their plans, however, have had less immediate influence than might reasonably have been expected. They exclusively concerned Turkey and Poland, and were therefore totally unconnected with the treaty of Westphalia. In no one respect did they affect its two great fundamental articles, the organization of Germany, and the subsisting relations between France and that country. So far from infringing its leading articles, Russia might with little address have been made a guarantee to the execution of this treaty. This indeed, from a forced construction of the treaty of Teschen, she claimed to be, and her pretensions would have been readily admitted, if they had not been considered as preparatory to a more direct interference. At all events, it is obvious the growth of this empire was much less pernicious to France, than to any other of the European states; nay, little was wanting but an ordinary measure of skill to render it extremely advantageous both in a political and commercial view.

The second cause is the elevation of Prussia. In direct contradiction to what has been asserted, this event, so far from having given occasion to fresh wars, has proved the security and safeguard of Germany. With the exception of the short campaign of 1778, from the year 1763 down to our own times, no war has taken place between the head of the Empire and its members; and Prussia, so far from having fomented division

between them, has often by actual interference settled their disputes. We are told, and this undoubtedly is a grievance of no ordinary size, that France has become almost a stranger to the interests of the Empire. This is indubitably a consequence of the elevation of Prussia, and surely not a pernicious one. Prussia does more effectually what France only attempted to do before; she protects the smaller states against the enterprises of the more powerful, and secures the general frontier. Nay, she secures the frontier of France itself, and balances that power (Russia) from whom alone France had any thing to dread, and leaves her at full liberty to employ in other measures her arms and her wealth.

It is argued that all debates on the constitution of the Empire being no longer interpreted by a third party, have been decided by force, or at the will of the stronger powers. History contradicts this statement. It is true, no third party out of the Empire has existed, or has been wanted. Prussia has supplied the place of umpire and judge formerly occupied by France, and in lieu of a foreign and distant auxiliary, Germany has the satisfaction of finding at home a faithful and powerful friend. Besides, this happened principally by voluntary dereliction; France deserted the Empire by forming an alliance with its head in the year 1756; a circumstance to which many politicians ascribe the destruction of that monarchy.

But the Protestant confederacy has lost the very name which indicated a community of rights and interests, and we no longer hear of any thing but the Prussian party. " This, however, is not the consequence of a particular event ; it results from a greater and more general revolution." It is obvious that the Protestant cause can have lost none of its weight or influence, under the protection of Prussia, a Protestant power itself, and consequently a more proper guardian than Catholic France. The fact is, nothing but the name has been changed ; the confederacy is in all respects the same. Political ties and bonds have grown more efficacious than those of a community of religious persuasions. A great indifference for religious denominations at least, not to speak of its internal spirit, has taken place in the Empire ; this is supplied by a new portion of political enterprise.

Again it is urged, that the example of Prussia in supporting a prodigious army, disproportionate to her natural strength, and amassing treasures for their support equally disproportionate to her means, has had a most pernicious influence on the general system of Europe. It has taught other states to stretch the springs of administration to their utmost tension, and introduced such a dreadful and systematic oppression, that it has contributed very essentially in its result to the general disorganization and disorder ; in other words, to the war of the revolution, to a general con-

federacy against France. But have such effects been derived from the elevation of Prussia ? That state, it is true, from necessity, from the narrow extent and distant situation of its territory, was obliged to make very extraordinary efforts ; and on these were grounded conscription and accumulation, by which its armies were augmented and its treasury filled. How little these expedients are ruinous may be amply proved from its own history, since, at the epoch of the French revolution, no state united in a greater degree, power and prosperity, energy and wisdom.

It does not appear that the example of Prussia was imitated in the most important instance, that of accumulation, by any of the European powers. Some of the forms of levying troops might probably be borrowed from her ; but all that was essential and characteristic remained with her. The force maintained was proportioned to the rank and consequence she assumed at the close of the seven years war, and gave no cause either to its neighbours or to more distant powers, to make any efforts beyond their strength. In reality, it is to France itself, when under the government of Louis XIV. that the idea of these large armies may be properly referred ; and the only thing singular in the case of Prussia, is the circumstance of a wise and great sovereign being able to give it a rank and station denied by nature.

It is not by Prussia that disorganization and disorder have been produced. In no respect has she

deranged the system founded by the peace of Westphalia; so far from infringing its leading article, the German constitution; it has received strength and security from her hands. If it has affected the other material article, the political connexions of France with the Empire, it has been to the obvious advantage of the latter; nor ought France in justice to blame measures which originated with herself. In no instance can Prussia be charged with deranging the political system of Europe. She has merely followed the progressive movements of the other powers, with the honourable exception of having introduced in that progress greater regularity, order, and vigour, than any others, perhaps than all united.

In addition it should never be forgotten, that Prussia at once from situation and power becomes the protectress of Europe from the undue predominance of Russia, and offers, as was observed before, even to France itself, an effectual barrier against the only power able to cope with it: and thus Prussia, instead of weakening the old system, may be justly argued to have given it additional force and efficacy.

The third cause is, the prodigious extension of the colonial and maritime system: this event, it is allowed, has very sensibly affected the peace of Westphalia. Our object, therefore, will be to consider, whether the balance of power in Europe is compatible with the changes it intro-

duced ; to examine how far the increase of the commercial and colonial system, must necessarily bring with it the destruction of the political system, by introducing into other states weakness and disorganization, and thus preparing them for entire subjection.

In this part of his work Mr. H. under cover of general principles, directs a particular and laboured attack against Great Britain. This will be more properly considered and refuted in a distinct part of the present work. The subject is here considered under a general view. Mr. Gentz is of opinion, in the first place, that the commercial and colonial system has not deranged the fundamental dispositions of the treaty of Westphalia. It is clear, that in no instance it affected the two leading points of it, the Germanic constitution, and the connexions of France with the Empire. As to the new interests and relations it opened, these could not be foreseen, and are out of the sphere of public right introduced or established by that treaty. It was impossible to adjust future contingencies. The treaty must not be blamed for that, but those who ascribe to it more than, from its nature and extent, it was possible to achieve.

Secondly. The increase of this system has not been effected by the ambition, avarice, or address of any particular power. It has been the necessary and inevitable result of the development and expansion of the human powers. Now

such an event must of course be compatible with the general objects of social existence, and consequently with the stability of a federative constitution, and the perfection of public right. It is from this expansive faculty, that our author derives all the great and memorable revolutions of history, the discovery of America, and the present great spirit of commercial enterprise. The extension of the commercial system is not to be ascribed to such a law or institution, to the wisdom or the address of Cromwell or Colbert. It is not to her Act of Navigation that England is indebted for her commercial and naval greatness. It rises from the spirit of the times ; it has grown out of the progress of human improvement. Hereafter it will be more particularly proved, that this celebrated act was in no instance or respect " an act of permanent conspiracy and eternal war against the industry of all other nations ;" for such it has been termed, in the language of declamation, or malignity.

Since this system has this natural origin, it cannot be destructive of the claims of society, or the interests of humanity ; nor fatal to the public and federative rights of nations. If it has engendered some disputes, and even produced some wars, how, it may be asked, can any system subsist without them ? It is fully sufficient for the present argument to shew that this system, considered in its consequences, notwithstanding the immense riches and colonial settlements of

some of the European powers, has always adapted itself with facility and address to all the ancient, social, and public relations of Europe: that further, there is every rational probability and expectation, that if the dreadful events subsequent to 1789, had not entirely sapped the foundations of public right, it would have continued to preserve it free from molestation and danger.

In the third place: Its influence has not been confined to a few states. All, more or less, have taken part in it. Here has been no monopoly, no exclusion. The blessing has been common, and almost universally felt. Some nations by situation and naval habits were enabled to seize the first fruits; but they could not appropriate them. That would have been in contradiction to the natural order of things. These commodities diffused over other countries, stimulated their respective wants and industry, and incited them to the same pursuits. Look at Spain and Portugal, envied and decried as they were. Of what avail was their exclusive possession of the East and the West? They soon became little better than instruments and canals to convey to more industrious states those riches and treasures they had indeed discovered, but were unable to use. Private society was embellished and advantaged; the public means and resources strengthened and improved. States themselves seemed advanced by proportionate aggrandizement. The mass became more rich and powerful, while the different mem-

bers continued to stand in the same relations and bearings to each other. It is not pretended that these advantages were dealt out with an equal hand; it is not asserted that Germany was as essentially benefited as France or Russia, as England and Holland. But difference and inequality are by no means confined to the commercial system; it is the case of every federative one. Had no maritime interests been created, a diversity of character, more or less of national activity, different forms of government, a variety of causes, would have effected a change in the system of Europe, at least as sensible as that which has been experienced.

Had a few states indeed possessed and secured the monopoly of these great advantages, and by their means obtained a decided ascendency over the destiny of Europe, while the other states remained poor and inactive, then it might reasonably have been complained that the federative system was oppressed and extinguished by the preponderance of the commercial one. But since this has not been the case, since no state has remained an idle spectator of the general industry, and since all have been gainers, though not in equal proportions, in the general harvest of commerce, it appears literally impossible that this system can have been the cause of the general disorder and disorganization.

In the fourth place: The superior advantages resulting from the possession of colonies and ma-

ritime commerce, were avowedly shared out amongst several nations, and consequently formed in the general equilibrium of Europe a particular equilibrium amongst the maritime nations. Five nations in particular took the lead in these pursuits; Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and England. The two former, notwithstanding the most splendid colonial establishments, from a defect in their governments, or national character, were unable to use these advantages with prudence or success. The balance was pretty equally distributed amongst the remaining three, whose governments were such as enabled their respective subjects to apply themselves with vigour and perseverance to commercial pursuits.

It is not a little extraordinary that a French writer should so eloquently declaim against the exclusive advantages of England, when his own country has been so sensibly enriched from the very same source. Strange that this should be so entirely forgotten! The Levant trade, one of the most lucrative branches of modern commerce, has ever been almost exclusively in the hands of France. Till the middle of the last century she maintained a decided ascendancy in the East Indies, and when she lost that, still retained some considerable possessions. On the continent of America she possessed some fine and fertile provinces, and the very best of the Caribbees; that island which in 1789 was worth nearly all the rest. France was once the first, and ever the

second of the maritime and commercial powers. Her returns from commerce filled her with specie. According to Mr. Neckar's calculation, she derived from St. Domingo nearly three millions sterling annually.—How unjust is censure, how absurd complaint !

Some individuals, or even nations, might take umbrage at the superior success of France, and the other two great maritime nations ; but Europe was advantaged by this balance and equipoise. By these means a useful concurrence was established, and every country was supplied, and in every article of their wants, with copiousness, punctuality, and cheapness.

In the fifth place : The power obtained by the maritime states through the extension of their commerce and their colonial establishments, formed in the political scale a new counterpoise against an undue preponderancy of any of the continental kingdoms.

Since no federative constitution can long continue perfect and unimpaired, it may surely be considered as a peculiar advantage, that any mode or expedient may be found to repair its defects and regenerate its excellencies. Now the utility of the resource just pointed out for this very purpose, stands proved by some strong historical facts. It is incontestable that England and Holland, at the close of the seventeenth century, made head against the greatest powers on the continent, maintained the balance of power, and

saved the liberties of Europe. How incompetent they were to face such rivals, except by the aid of the new system, is too obvious to demand explanation.

These observations apply to the reign of Louis XIV. and with peculiar propriety to that portion of it which elapsed from the peace of Nimeguen to that of Rywick. Yet, strange to say, this is the very period chosen by Mr. Hauterive to illustrate the dangers of the maritime preponderancy ; and the league of Augsburgh, which stands consecrated in the page of history as a noble confederacy to maintain the general liberties of Europe, becomes, in the hands of a claimér, a partial, paltry, ignominious coalition, a coalition meant only to serve the purpose of private aggrandizement in the House of Orange, and support the maritime ascendancy of England and Holland. Such an opinion is too paradoxical, not to say absurd, to deserve a serious refutation. The question turns upon this point, did the arbitrary temper and ambitious disposition of Louis XIV. render such measures indispensably necessary ? Let the readers of modern history determine this point. Posterity may be thankful that such a barrier was found in the growing ascendancy of the maritime powers, against the inroads of ambition and the projects of universal dominion.

It appears then, upon the whole, that the extension of the colonial and commercial system was in no respect whatever contradictory to that

of public right, and that, so far from it, it repeatedly protected and preserved it. The charge against the other two causes appears equally destitute of foundation. The system of public right was not destroyed by these causes ; it subsisted at the epoch of the French revolution. This being positively denied by Mr. Hauterive, it becomes a point at issue. Its existence will be best proved by a view of the different powers of Europe, in their internal and external condition. This will set the question at rest. A few preliminary observations will, however, be necessary.

## CHAP. II.

*Proofs, from the actual State of Europe, that there existed a general System of Improvement.*

FROM the middle of the eighteenth century there was a great and obvious tendency in the governments of Europe to improvement. The feudal chains had been shaken off: a very considerable augmentation of riches had taken place. Learning, the arts and sciences, had been cultivated with success, and a taste for reading had contributed most essentially to the general cultivation. This social advancement is demonstrated by the important changes which had been made in every part of the administration of government, by the revision of laws, particularly the criminal code; by the protection of agriculture, the construction of roads, and the digging of canals; by the reform of all harsh modes of taxation, the general rejection of monopolies, the diminution of privileges, and by the improved modes of education for the rising generation. It is not, however, asserted, that such a system was pursued in all its purity, and that every trace of barbarism was removed, but that there was an obvious, designed, and well-digested tendency to a general melioration through-

out Europe. Nor was its progress, as in the best days of antiquity, casual and uncertain, but regulated by fixed principles and systematic views. It is in this spirit of improvement, that we may more probably find the preparatory causes of those dreadful revolutionary storms which have marked the passage from one century to another. In the people, an idea of their power, sentiments of liberty, and a persuasion of personal dignity, had given rise to a variety of designs and pretensions hitherto unknown. Riches produced avarice, liberty engendered pride, and learning gave birth to the most dangerous speculations. Defects equally obvious appeared on the side of the governing party: they often precipitated the execution of their plans; they weakened their resources by an improvident use; they harassed and offended the temper of their subjects by violent measures, and for which they were unprepared. Instead of tranquillizing, they rashly encouraged that dangerous fermentation of the public mind, which marked the age. Sovereigns often gave their confidence to ministers, at best imprudent, perhaps faithless, by whose counsels they were plunged into inextricable difficulties. It appears, then, that the root of the evil did not lie in the want of political principles, or a federative system, as Mr. H. insists, but in the abuse of proper maxims of government, and the perversion of uncontested administrative truths. It was greatness which caused our fall, it was ambition which

ended in disgrace and defeat. An ill-timed zeal for reform, a disproportionate system of melioration, too wide a deviation from the certain road of experience into the wild regions of speculation: these, by an unfortunate concurrence of events, and the address of men rising to power on the ruins of the French monarchy, became the instruments of general disorganization. A short sketch of the internal state of the principal powers of Europe will fully prove my position, that there existed a general spirit of improvement and melioration.

RUSSIA saw her second regeneration under Catherine II. Whoever compares that vast country rising out of the hands of Peter the Great, and as it really existed in the period comprised between 1780 and 1790, will bear witness to the prodigious improvement it had experienced. Her new code of laws, a variety of measures distinguished by a wise and liberal policy, her encouragement of national industry, her public establishments for the benefit of the health and education of her subjects, her indefatigable zeal in the promotion of arts and sciences: who shall presume to call these symptoms of disorganization, and elements of confusion? Those very enterprises which rendered her government so dangerous to the repose of Europe, her projects of aggrandizement, had in general their origin in this tendency to perfection, for whose completion time alone was wanting. Wearyed with the slow progress of national improvement, the Empress rushed forward by a

premature anticipation to seize the objects of her wishes. Her plans were greater than her means of execution ; and though she tasked her energies and redoubled her exertions, it became impossible to attain that in a few years, which from ordinary hands it demanded a century to complete. In this fervid and dangerous ambition we clearly trace the predominant characteristic of the age.

The AUSTRIAN monarchy under Joseph II. exhibits the lively spectacle of a sovereign enthusiastically bent on reform, and of subjects obstinately determined to resist his will, and repay every act of kindness with ingratitude. To introduce an uniform administration into a state made up of the most discordant elements, seems rather a philosophical dream, than a practical measure. The motive was undoubtedly good; those who were interested in the retention of ancient abuses joined loudly in the cry against him. Enlightened minds at that period thought more kindly of his actions, and posterity will do him an ample, but a tardy justice. It is true, his precipitation sometimes degenerated into violence. Many well-founded complaints of his subjects were totally disregarded, and their undoubted rights and privileges were sometimes sacrificed to speculative ideas of perfection. But many of his plans were derived from the soundest wisdom, others were attended with salutary and durable effects. He has secured immortal glory to his name, by a great variety of improvements in re-

ligious and economical establishments, by an improved legislation; and by unnumbered foundations for the encouragement of industry, in all the various branches of its exertion. It should never be forgotten, that the serious disturbances which broke out in Holland and the Low Countries, originated in the dissatisfaction excited by the too precipitate execution of the most beneficent purposes, by the too rapid progress of his mind towards objects confessedly important, but at that particular time unattainable. Had Providence permitted a longer reign to the equally benevolent mind, and more conciliating temper of his brother Leopold—had not that dreadful storm, the French revolution, swept away at once every established institution, every promised regulation, it is scarcely possible to conceive to what a degree of prosperity the Austrian empire might have arrived.

**PRUSSIA.** After approving himself the first general of the age, Frederic II. became, during the last twenty-three years of his life, equally eminent for cultivating the arts, and diffusing the blessings of peace. Under his forming hands, Prussia became an admirable model of order, regularity, and the cultivation of internal energy, extensive activity, and true civil liberty. His example was of infinite utility, as more than one prince adopted his wise measures of administration; and all Germany made a conspicuous and rapid progress in improvement, while such glorious instances as Austria and Prussia in the south and the north

enlightened the minds of men, cheered their labours, and directed their practice.

**GREAT BRITAIN.** The very name of its administration repels every idea of decline and decay. The situation of this empire, after the peace of 1783, gave the first public sanction to those new principles that had been discovered of the true sources of national riches. The loss of her colonies was the true epoch of her real and permanent greatness. It was not properly till after this period she acquired the distinct idea of her intrinsic power, and an exact knowledge of the proper means to promote and augment it. Hitherto she had shared, more or less, those wrong notions, on which all the governments of Europe had established their commercial systems. It was then her conduct illustrated this new path of opulence ; and by establishing the wisest and most salutary principles, she served as a guide to all other nations. The French revolution, which retarded the progress of improvement in every state of Europe, necessarily interrupted in England the perfect developement of its admirable and enlightened system of administration. If, during the course of that terrible war, lighted up by that revolution, she was able to maintain her power and support her dignity, this may be considered as a political phenomenon, which can be explained only by the history of the ten years preceding administration.

**DENMARK,** during the same period, is distin-

guished by measures less brilliant, but equally praiseworthy. By a conduct wise and liberal, she attained those opposite extremes in politics, the augmentation of the revenues of the state, and the increase of private opulence: she brought into contact and union the power of the throne and the liberty of the subject. Improvements of every kind marked the interior of the kingdom. The entire suppression of corporeal servitude, a perfect adjustment of the relation between landlords and tenants, an improved and improving agriculture, a perfect harmony between the respective estates of the country, mutual confidence between sovereign and subject: here is an historical sketch worthy the notice of prosperity.

SWEDEN, under Gustavus III. partook of the general improvement. The active spirit of that prince left no branch of public economy untouched. He gave order and animation to one of the worst regulated and most dangerous administrations of Europe; and, in spite of opposition, supplied its government with a base, on which his happier successors may erect a more glorious and useful edifice. The reports which he submitted, from time to time, to the Diet of the Empire, are an honourable and durable monument of the intensity of his care and the profundity of his researches. Though his character was not exempt from precipitancy and passion, and often operated in opposition to his zeal for the good of his country, still Sweden can never

be so ungrateful as to forget his benefits; and posterity will number him with those sovereigns who have deserved well of their subjects.

POLAND. It may appear a little rash to add this name to my present catalogue, but I have ample authority to do it. It was obvious no essential reform could take place there, without an amendment in its constitution of government. Its weakness and decline originated there. Now it was this very circumstance, which had engrossed the attention of the most enlightened men of that country; and its disastrous partition in 1772 was at least attended by this good effect, that all minds became impressed with a conviction of the necessity of a great political regeneration. This was unequivocally demonstrated at the Diet of 1788. Its result is well known. The constitution of 1791 became the guarantee of a happier destiny, and of a political existence more conformable to the spirit and the general progress of improvement. This is no place to enumerate those events, which stifled this constitution in its very birth, and for ever erased Poland from the list of nations. It is however an observation, whose truth cannot be controverted, that without the French revolution, the constitution of 1791 would have remained unimpaired, and the political consistency of the country undissolved.

SPAIN and PORTUGAL occupy the lowest place in this enumeration, yet they felt the force of the irresistible impulsion. From the date of Pom-

bal's administration, Portugal seemed to start out of her long sleep ; another such a minister, a single sovereign endued with an active disposition, and Portugal had burst the bonds of political slavery !

Spain began to feel her proper station in Europe : and though the difficulties by which she was encompassed, were undeniably great, yet did she appear to possess courage to meet them. Time and opportunity were yet wanting ; but the evil was known, and consequently it was remediable. In fact, she had given the world an earnest of success.

ITALY made some steps in this new career, though by no means proportioned to her advantageous situation. Leopold had converted his Tuscany into a paradise, and had afforded the world an illustrious instance, what evil might be averted, and what good obtained, by twenty years of wisdom and activity. The example was not lost. In the administration of the Papal government, Cardinal Ruffo conceived and realized the idea of adding to the comfort and security of a state by a well-constructed system of public economy. Naples, which, through a defective and disorganized government, scarcely left its administrator a power of doing good, turned at last an attentive ear to wise counsels, and projected the execution of a salutary reform.

FRANCE. To complete our picture, we must cast a view on the great centre and metropolis of

the revolution. That the old government stood in need of a reform, and that there existed very gross defects in the legislation and interior administration, is too obvious to be denied. It is further clear, that the reign of Louis XV. led the way to a general disorganization: but concession stops here. Does the reign of Louis XVI. considered from its beginning to its melancholy close, authorize the assertion, that there existed no public right in Europe? Did not the spirit of useful reform animate every measure of internal administration? And was it not the misfortune of his government to be mistaken in the calculation of its force, and to have fallen under the load of its important undertakings? Is it possible, that the monarch who called Turgot and Malesherbes to a share in his counsels, who twice confided to Neckar the destiny of the empire, could be in reality the friend of error and the patron of abuse? Was the convocation of the Notables, and the plan they were called upon to complete, the work of a narrow, paltry, despicable policy? Is not the convocation of the States General to be referred rather to a too ready compliance, than to a rigid inflexibility? The edict of July 1788, the decree of the 29th December 1788, the discourse of the minister of finance, in May 1789, and the fatal declaration of May 23, whence did these spring? And the whole revolution, has it not been produced by the abuse of systematic principles, and not by the want of them? It was

not from the excess and accumulation of ill, that the misfortunes of France and Europe have arisen, but from a rash precipitancy to seize good un-matured by time.

Our author having thus shewn that there existed in every nation an active spirit of improvement, necessarily incompatible with disorganization and decline, turns his attention to the external state of Europe. This he considers with great exactitude and impartiality, for the sake of ascertaining that important question, whether a system of public right existed, or not.

## CHAP. III.

*Refutation of the supposed political Grievances of England.*

MR. Gentz commences this part of his work, by defining what he means, and what is generally meant, by a system of public right; and then shews, as is always the case when practice follows theory, that it cannot be exercised without great and visible imperfection. What he endeavours to make good, and what should settle all dispute on this subject, is this position, that at no preceding period whatever, did public right exist, or was exercised with greater energy, or ever better answered the end for which it was instituted, than during the last ten years preceding the revolution. It was not then a dissolution of the social and federative bonds, which produced that event; but, on the contrary, that event which unsettled and disorganized Europe.

There are five great powers, on whose conduct the political equilibrium of Europe very essentially depends: France, Austria, Russia, Prussia, and England. It is proposed to consider respectively their public and federative relations, with an occasional mention of the secondary powers, so that the reader may be able to take an ample and connected view of the subject.

Our first attention shall be directed to France. Agreeably to the acknowledged principles of the federative system, a state may be considered as subsisting in a proper relation with others, when by natural and local advantages, or by political connexions, or by both united, she finds herself in a state of security from the attacks of other powers. In addition, a great and puissant state, for the maintenance of its rank and dignity in the political scale, may be admitted to possess a certain degree of influence over the other powers, and over the general system of Europe.

The latter of these considerations is by no means so important as the former, because not determinable with equal precision, and susceptible of greater exaggeration. But still its necessity is incontestable; for without connexions and alliances, at once insulated and abandoned, a state could never be sufficiently secured by local advantages, but might fall a victim to the first powerful confederacy formed against it. It is under these two points of view that it is intended to consider the state of France previous to the revolution.

Nothing surely was ever better adapted to the great object of security, than the geographical and military situation of this country. Its frontiers were principally a line of sea-coast; or, in points where she stood connected with the continent, nature or art had erected impregnable fortresses. Protected from Italy and Spain by the Alps and Pyrenees, and still more effectually by

a superiority of military strength ; guarded on the north and the east by fortresses numerous, strong, and connected ; and, to crown the whole, abounding with a people of an active military disposition, cultivating at the same time the arts and sciences ; what could be more chimerical and ridiculous than an idea of the conquest of France ? Had Russia been disposed to hostilities, there were distance and German politics to contend with. Did the ambition of Austria shew itself, Prussia threw itself into the opposite scale. Did Prussia menace war, Austria stood ready to repress her. In fact, Austria, from whose power and aggressions France had the most to dread, had, for above thirty years, been bound by an alliance, which she had preserved with the most scrupulous fidelity. Spain was connected with France by the strongest ties of blood and political interest. The King of Sardinia, exclusively of the bonds of consanguinity, might be considered as her natural ally, and the natural enemy of Austria, from the well-known ambitious views of that power on Italy. Turkey had at every period entertained a strong partiality for French connexions. Never, in fact, did there exist through Europe such a general favourable disposition towards France ; never was her security more complete, her preponderance less dubious.

England was the only power which combined with an opposition of interest the means of offence and injury. A striking contrast in the characters

of the two nations, ages of bloody war, a rivalry grounded upon the most important objects of national grandeur, had sown the seeds of discord and hatred. Through the last century England was the only state which really triumphed over France, and sensibly disgraced her. Hence the prospect of perfect peace and lasting union seemed totally closed. But in fact, notwithstanding this formidable appearance, the dangers of France were merely secondary and subordinate. Her colonies, it is true, might be attacked and taken ; her trade might be exposed, nay destroyed : still was she secure and inviolable at home ; and still was she seen reviving with unexpected alacrity from distress and defeat.

On a review of the naval wars of the eighteenth century between the two countries, it does not appear that the balance ever inclined long or seriously to either side. France was humiliated at the peace of Fontainbleau ; but after a respite of twenty years, her marine rose from its ruins with additional splendour, contested the empire of the seas, and tore from its rival's hands its most valuable colonies. It must, at all events, be admitted that the ascendancy of Great Britain was never such, during the period alluded to, as to endanger her security as a nation in the least degree. It might be mentioned as an additional safeguard to all these outworks, that a treaty of commerce had been concluded with her ancient rival, which seemed to offer the flattering prospect of a long and uninterrupted peace. Having thus ascertain-

ed the natural strength of France, let us consider the nature and extent of her political preponderance. Her influence in the affairs of Europe rose to its greatest height under Louis XIV.; but his pretensions were so extravagant, that they alarmed the fears and united the arms of all the European powers: hence her ascendancy perceptibly declined, and though it never appears to have fallen beneath its just and proper level, it suffered a still greater depression from the scandalous apathy or criminal neglect of the ministers of Louis XV.; but it rose to distinction and eminence under the unfortunate Louis XVI. A convincing proof of this may be found in the active and successful interference in the American war. Other testimonies are at hand. France, supported with Austria as estimable a connexion as political skill could devise; she had her choice between that power and Prussia, and reaped the harvest of her preference in a peace of thirty years. But let it be submitted to the reader, as an incontestable mark of her decided ascendancy, that she never suffered the alliance to operate to her own disadvantage, or to the aggrandizement of her ally. Hence her successful interference in the Bavarian succession, and the affair of the Scheldt; hence her friendly disposition to Prussia, and the other Germanic states, who stood opposed to Austria. Never before or since the treaty of Westphalia did France occupy such a commanding situation as a federative power.

From the year 1762 she found herself in close union with Spain. The celebrated family compact secured the inestimable advantage of a fleet of eighty sail, and a liberal share of the treasures of Mexico and Peru. Through her assistance she was enabled to dispossess England of her American colonies, and after directing at will all her political movements for thirty years, still retained, after the dreadful storm of the revolution, her original influence. By this compact she extended her influence to Italy, secured Parma and Naples, and made the vast extent of territory from the Alps to Malta feel her supremacy.

Notwithstanding the great changes that took place in the politics of Europe, and the imminent danger to which Turkey stood exposed from Russia and Austria, notwithstanding the doubt whether France would be able to lend her any effectual assistance in her distress, still did the influence of that country continue unabated. Nor can there be any doubt that the same predominance would have been felt and acknowledged in the same extent if the revolution had not overthrown every established principle.

Russia was, indeed, a power over whom France could not hope to exert a durable ascendancy. Exclusive of the maintenance of the general balance of Europe, there does not appear to have been a single political interest common to them both. Turkey, of which one affected the ruin, and the other the preservation, became a constant

source of discord and opposition. Besides, England, by her great commercial connexions, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, had reduced the consideration of her rival. However, in 1787, when a very advantageous treaty of commerce was concluded, France had obviously risen in estimation. But, on the very worst supposition, nothing serious was ever to be apprehended from Russia. Two great powers, Austria and Prussia, appeared as counterpoises to her preponderance; an alliance with either secured for France the friendship and assistance of the other; and thus, almost without any necessity of active co-operation, she might enjoy perfect security. Another barrier, from an unaccountable and perfidious negligence, France suffered to be removed by the dismemberment of Poland. This was the more unpardonable, because it was suspected at that time, and has since been ascertained, that Austria was a reluctant partner in the confederacy; and the alliance of those three powers, in itself unnatural, was that of all others, which, if directed against France, might have been fatal to her greatness. The effects of that partition, from the mode in which it was arranged, were not detrimental to the general balance of power, did not affect the general system of public right, nor even exclude France from a considerable influence in the affairs of that very kingdom.

Another striking proof that France, even in 1772, a period of avowed apathy and neglect, could

rouse herself to useful and dignified exertions, may be found in her transactions with Sweden. It was at Paris that the plan of the Swedish revolution was laid ; it was from the cabinet of Versailles that Gustavus received instruction and encouragement ; it was hence his success was ensured. The enterprise was in itself of great political moment ; it gave independence to a considerable state, delivered a province out of the hands of Russia, and fixed a barrier in the North against her further progress and advancement.

The affair of Holland, in 1787, may probably be produced as an argument of the declining federative consequence of France, but it never can be admitted as any thing more than a passing cloud, a temporary obscuration of her diplomatic splendour ; it is no proof of the decline and dissolution of her power. It arose out of circumstances purely accidental, of which England and Prussia availed themselves with dexterity, or sprung from financial difficulties and internal troubles. On a supposition that this statement were totally denied, it might be observed that this event happened in 1787 ; a period when the revolution had actually commenced, if not for Europe, at least for France ; if not in its dreadful acts of terror and death, at least in its preliminary scenes of turbulence and confusion. Upon the whole, it is hoped that the following points are made good : First, That, at the epoch in question, the political security of France was, in its most essential respects,

as firmly established as it was possible to wish, not only by local and territorial advantages, but by the views and conduct of other powers.

Secondly, That her influence on the federative system of Europe bore a proportion to her political importance: though it was depressed at the close of the reign of Louis XIV. and still more sensibly under that of Louis XV. it now exhibited in no respect any symptom of decline or decay.

Thirdly, That before the revolution she was dreaded and respected by the higher powers, and courted by the smaller: that her connexions with Austria were of the most advantageous stamp: that from Russia nothing was to be feared; or, if any inquietude arose, it was effectually counterbalanced by her great and exclusive predominance over Spain, Italy, Switzerland, and Turkey; and that if her influence in Poland was partly destroyed by its division in 1772, it was at least compensated by a close and useful alliance with Sweden.

Fourthly and lastly, That France, considered as a naval power, had been successful against the only state she had reason to dread: that her inferiority had been merely transient, and that her last war (closing in 1783) had been the most glorious she had ever waged against England.

It is properly at this period, comprising the years between the peace of 1783 and the commencement of the revolution, that we are to make a stand, and form our judgment on the

contested points. We are called upon to decide whether, according to Mr. Gentz's arguments, France did not maintain her political ascendancy or consequence in Europe, or whether, agreeably to Mr. Houterive's ideas, she had not descended from her proper rank, was unable to maintain the balance of power, was persecuted, abandoned, and despised by all the co-existing states. Let facts decide the difference; let history be the judge.

AUSTRIA. The power of this empire had considerably declined after the peace of Westphalia, and may be considered as receiving still further limitations by the treaty of Utrecht, which fixed the crown of Spain on the head of a Bourbon. It was exposed to more immediate and imminent danger on the demise of Charles VI. from which it was rescued by its dignified firmness, and the generous interference of England. The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle replaced her precisely in her ancient position with respect to France and Germany; but that portion of her dominions which had been wrested from her by Prussia was irrevocably lost. The bloody seven years war was her last ruinous attempt to recover them.

Of the great events of the eighteenth century, two were advantageous, two unfavourable to this power. The progressive decline of Turkey delivered her from one of her most dangerous enemies; her alliance with France enabled her to support her ascendancy in Germany. The ele-

vation of Russia, and the aggrandizement of Prussia, were highly prejudicial to her interests. The former was ever counteracting her views abroad, the latter ever rising in opposition to her at home. On the whole, the disadvantages very sensibly overbalanced the conveniences. A territorial accession had fallen to her by the partition of Poland; but that was merely an equivalent for what was gained by the other two confederated powers. It is obvious then that the balance of power was not disturbed by Austria; for the last hundred years her relative consideration had rather diminished, and in no essential respects could she be compared to France. Joseph II. it is true, distinguished his reign by some ambitious projects, but none of them were executed; and their failure, instead of proving the want of a federative system, fully ascertains its active and useful existence. His first attempt was upon Bavaria. Prussia rose in arms immediately, the cabinets of Versailles and Petersburgh negotiated with success, and the peace of Teschen gave him a fifteenth part where he had demanded a moiety, and an acquiescence in the claims of Prussia on Franconia. His second enterprise was directed against Holland. The abolition of the barrier treaty, a dereliction of the established frontiers, and the opening of the Scheldt, were the ruinous pretensions advanced on this occasion. Had there been no system of public right in existence, Holland must have fallen. On the contrary, all

Europe felt the sensation of this gross attempt to destroy its established equilibrium; and even France, though closely connected by blood and alliance, came forward, and effected a total change in the Emperor's intentions. It appears from a memoir of Vergennes since published, that it was the subject of debate in the cabinet, whether, in case a renunciation of his pretensions could not be otherwise obtained, the alliance should not be dissolved and war declared.

His third project had in view the total ruin of the Turkish empire. In this attempt he was joined by the Empress of Russia in 1788. The internal troubles of France forbade the hope of effective interposition in favour of her old friend and ally. But safety was found in the existence and vigour of the federative system. The interference of England, Prussia, and Sweden, rescued the Ottoman Porte from ruin, and by the treaty of Szistow the Emperor was compelled to relinquish all his conquests. This is the most remarkable peace in modern history: never did negotiation so completely triumph over arms; never did the efficacy and energy of the system of a political equilibrium appear so completely established. And what renders the event more deserving of attention, and more useful in the subject of our present discussion, is the circumstance of its having happened in 1790, that very period, when, if we are to believe Mr. Hauterive, the system of public right was dissolved and destroyed.

**PRUSSIA.** An abridged view of this part of Mr. Gentz's work appears to me all that is necessary. His arguments justify the plan of Prussia in increasing and concentrating her territorial domains as necessary to the tranquillity of Germany and the interests of Europe. He vindicates the partition of Poland, nay, both partitions, on the ground of its being generally advantageous, noxious to none of the particular states, and by no means infringing the great federative scheme, and political equilibrium of the whole. It will of course be supposed the *moral* principle of the partition is given up; and on this subject Mr. G. expresses himself with a generous indignation that does him honour. From his inquiry these consequences result: that it was to the general interest of Europe, and the particular security of Germany, that Prussia should become a state of equal power and consequence with those who took the lead on the continent: that the influence derived from such a situation, and the relations it opened, were extremely useful in maintaining the federative system unimpaired, and introducing negotiation as a substitute for war: that consequently its success cannot in any respect be considered as tending to the disorganization of Europe, or placing it in a state of anarchy and confusion.

**RUSSIA,** next to France, seems to be that power which from situation, extent of territory, variety of resources, and the nature of its govern-

ment, had the most solid and permanent foundation; and might, without improper assumption, or violent interference, claim a powerful influence over the states of Europe. The high pretensions and ambitious enterprises so frequently conspicuous in her conduct, may be properly resolved into the characteristic of the age, " that hasty and precipitate spirit, which scorns difficulties in the path of improvement, and rushes forward to the end without regarding the means." Of the Russian conquests of the eighteenth century, those of the provinces on the southern coast of the Baltic seem in some measure justified by the obvious conveniences and urgent necessities of the rising empire. These were achieved by its founder Peter the Great. His successors were often governed by an inordinate ambition, and their projects, at once senseless and daring, excited and justified the most pertinacious resistance. Should it appear that these attempts did not meet with any portion of the expected success; that however they might threaten, they did not at all disturb the balance of power in Europe, this circumstance must be set down to that side of the question here supported, and, so far from affording an argument that the ancient system of public right was destroyed, it will be a proof of demonstration that it subsisted in all its vigour, when it could resist and repress the ambition of such a powerful state.

Viewing the Russian empire as left by Catha-

rine, it appears that very exaggerated ideas have been entertained of its power. Its population, riches, and revenues, bore no proportion to the extent of its territory or the vastness of its projects. Its armies, in point of numbers, were not superior to those of Austria and France, while its distance from the scene of action reduced their effective value. Perhaps when the central situation of Prussia is considered, with its accumulated treasures, military discipline, and superior activity, that power may in itself be considered as an effectual counterpoise. The partition of Poland, it will be said, contradicts the idea of its not disturbing the political equilibrium; but it may with truth be answered, that the association by which it was effected, was one of the most extraordinary events in history, was a confederacy of powers naturally disunited, never likely to be brought together again, and forced into union by the commanding genius of Frederic II. the first general and politician of the age. But if some force were allowed to this objection, we must not forget another more important project in which Russia failed through the vigour of the federative system—the intended destruction of the Turkish empire. In this great undertaking she was joined by the whole power of Austria. Against reason, against probability, Joseph II. took an active share in this war. It was obviously in direct contradiction to his interests; however, he engaged in the business with the enthusiasm that

marked his character, and there appeared no hope of safety, not even a melancholy adjournment of the fall and ruin of the Ottoman Porte. The history of that war taught those whose imagination contemplated a second Russian empire rising on the ruins of Constantinople, that European politics possessed resources against every danger, and a barrier against any ambition. Not only did Prussia arm, but England, who might have seen with greater indifference than any other power the aggrandizement of Russia, became the soul of the most formidable opposition. From that moment may be dated the termination of the hopes of the two greatest powers in Europe. The King of Sweden, though a secondary power, entered the lists, and became a most active and dangerous enemy. He alarmed Catharine in the very centre of her empire, endangered her capital, and afforded a proof that inferior states, by the aid of favourable political combinations, may offer effectual resistance to the most powerful and ambitious monarchies. Soon after, the King of Prussia, having broken the force of this formidable alliance by the convention of Reichenbach, threatened her frontiers with a numerous army, and Russia, retaining only Oczackow, after all her conquests, restored by the treaty of Jassy peace and security to the Turkish empire. Thus the federative system of Europe was able to make an effectual opposition to Russia, irresistible as she appeared. Thus, in despite of her immense colossal territo-

ries, her prodigious resources, and the enterprising spirit of her sovereign, this vast empire was compelled to move within the limits prescribed by the political equilibrium.

ENGLAND. The political conduct and influence of that power will form the subject of our present inquiry; its commercial and colonial system will demand an attentive and exclusive investigation.

Considered under its true point of view, Mr. Hauterive's long historical recapitulation of the political grievances of Europe may be reduced to a single article, "The grievances of France." It is clear that Great Britain can never derive any advantage, not even a temporary one, by engaging in a continental war. She possesses no means of disturbing the peace and security of the continent, and cannot possibly become a conquering or usurping power. Since the decline of the Spanish power, England has had but one permanent enemy in Europe, whom she has found a rival in every enterprise, an opponent in every undertaking—one against whom a cruel necessity calls and ever will call her forth in array. Peace with the whole world, France excepted (and excepted by her own conduct), ever has been and ever must be the standing maxim of every British administration.

This truth is confirmed by the history of the whole century. All the wars in which England has been engaged have been directed against

France, immediately and exclusively, or have been brought about by events in which France played the principal part. All her alliances, all her treaties of subsidy, all her armaments, have constantly had France in view, and France only. So much has this been the single and exclusive object of her policy, that the whole diplomatic, military, and maritime system of the country has been directly, without deviation or exception, levelled against France.

This reflection will justify in every impartial reader a distrust of every accusation against England proceeding from a French pen. It weakens, while it simplifies, the mass “ of the offences of one government, and the grievances of all the rest.” From the moment that political relations are the question, it will be found that it is only by offending France, that England has offended, or can offend any other state. The question between England and Europe reduces itself in every possible case to a question between England and France. Never, on any occasion, but when the interest of France identifies itself with the interest of Europe, can England by its hostile enterprises deserve the reproaches, the hatred, and the resistance of Europe.

The judgment which, in all future contests, as well as in those that are past, England has a right to expect from the justice of Europe, ought to be grounded upon the following principles, which appear to me as evident as they are simple:

First, That in every war between France and England, which has their respective interests solely and exclusively for its object, it is the business of those states to defend and support their own rights. Europe may preserve its neutrality, and remain an indifferent spectator of the contest.

Secondly, That in every contest or war, in which France becomes dangerous to the independence and security of other states, the opposition of England agrees with the interest of Europe.

Thirdly, That in every contest or war, in which France finds itself in danger of being oppressed, dismembered, or deprived of its legitimate and useful political influence, the co-operation of England is in opposition to the interests of Europe.

Before we proceed to the application of these principles to the wars which have taken place between France and England before the revolution, it will be necessary to offer a few general reflections on those two states.

Were I to call in aid to my opinion, the arguments and the declamation, by which, for these last fifty years, the French writers have endeavoured to prove, that the internal force of Great Britain bore no proportion to that of France, I might upon their own testimony and authority decide this important question; from which power Europe had most to dread for its independence and equilibrium. According to their account, the English power is but a fragile building,

founded on a trembling basis, which would fail on the first attack. The riches of England are not real, solid, and permanent, but chimerical, artificial, perishable, depending on the circumstances of the moment, and liable, on their change, to vanish as rapidly as they appeared ; that the influence she has exercised in Europe is equally uncertain and disproportionate as the basis of her power, and will fall with it the moment Europe becomes sensible of her true interests. The power of France, on the contrary, reposes on a base as firm as it is vast ! A great and fertile country secures her resources without bounds ; her territorial riches have a very different solidity from the fugitive treasures of the commercial industry of England ; to the transient illusions, produced by the subsidies of her rival, she opposes the necessary, permanent, and imperishable influence of a continental power truly inexhaustible ; of a power formed, by its geographical, military, and political advantages, at once for attack and defence.

This statement, were I disposed to adopt it, would be an effectual answer to all complaints on the preponderance of England. But this looks so much like the chicanery of the bar, that I should disdain to use it, though my object in this work were merely the apology of the British government. The fact is, I deny the truth of this statement. I insist, that the power, riches, and political ascendancy of England are founded on a

base equally solid, though of a different kind, with that of France ; and, though their means and sources vary, the result and effect are the same.

It is equally true, if we are disposed to judge of the power of a state and its political influence merely from natural advantages, its geographical position, its obvious means of attack and defence, the object of its politics, and its aptitude to enterprise, without any regard to those changes and modifications which a good or bad administration may cause, then the advantages are manifestly on the side of France. As often as there is a danger of the equilibrium of Europe being disturbed, the probability is, that it will be rather to the detriment than to the advantage of England : I subjoin the reasons which seem to set the matter out of dispute.

In the first place, England is exclusively a maritime power. Rarely have its continental operations been important, never attended with durable effects. France is a power at once maritime and continental. By a well-judged disposition of her forces, she may oppose an effectual counterbalance to the naval power of England. We have seen examples ; others may occur. From the moment such an event takes place, France acquires in Europe a preponderancy of incalculable advantage.

Secondly. All the connexions, all the points of contact, in which England meets the continental

powers, are federative, mercantile, or pecuniary ; scarcely has she any that can be called military. She stands interdicted from every plan of conquest and aggrandizement. Her military forces can be employed only in temporary expeditions, nor are likely, any more than her fleets, ever to become the instruments of permanent dominion on the continent. Whereas France, exclusive of those federative, commercial, and pecuniary connexions she enjoys in common with her rival, possesses a fund of military resources, which enables her to undertake any great continental enterprise. She may employ at will, promises or threats, negotiation or action. Her limits in Europe are not, like those of England, fixed and determined for ever. They are susceptible of continual extension. This has been the case for several centuries. And if it be true, that before the revolution they had reached the extent prescribed by a wise and pacific system of policy, later events will prove that the calculations of ambition are of a different nature from those of wisdom.

Thirdly. France is, and has long been, perfectly secure from any external attack ; nay, were such an one successful, even on that supposition, it could never terminate in the loss of its independence, or the extinction of its political existence. England, it must be admitted, does not possess this invaluable advantage. Often has she been menaced with a direct invasion ; and

what aggravates the evil, should the attempt prove successful, it is impossible to foresee and calculate the dreadful consequences.

The practicability of a descent on England has often been discussed: I shall not engage in the examination. It is certain, the attempt presents difficulties of the greatest magnitude; and more particularly since the augmentation and improvement of her military defence, the invader must expect a most determined, perhaps an insurmountable resistance. It is however the concurrent opinion of those who are best informed on the subject, that such an event is by no means impossible. England herself has trembled under the threatened danger; and the French government, so far from reckoning the enterprise chimerical, has admitted it among her plans of operation. Now, were all other circumstances equal, that state which is on the faintest supposition liable to so mortal a blow, must lose in comparison with a state totally exempted from that danger.

Fourthly. An uninterrupted connexion with all the powers of Europe is of the highest consequence to a commercial state. England by her industry, or even by the address of her government, may be able to exclude such or such a nation from any particular market in Europe. But this she cannot effect by open force. France has, and can from time to time, by means of conquest, exclude any commercial nation from the most important markets and provinces. The political

basis of commerce appears, therefore, much narrower and less secure for England than for France: and thus in every continental war England stands exposed to a danger that threatens her well-being and existence, while France is perfectly secure.

After these general reflections, it only remains for me to exhibit a short sketch of the wars that have taken place between France and England, that I may give an historical answer to the question, “ Which of the two powers has on these occasions most frequently consulted the interests of Europe ? ”

We have had frequent occasion to speak of the wars of Louis XIV. and indeed nothing can be clearer than the respective situation of the powers who were engaged in them. The life of William III. was a perpetual combat for the maintenance of the political equilibrium of Europe. This struggle may metaphorically be considered as a long tragic drama, of which the war for the Spanish succession was the last act. If France did not terminate this war with greater disgrace than on any former occasion, it was evidently owing to the disinterestedness of England; and the French writers have with one voice admitted it. It requires but a slender acquaintance with the history of that period to recollect the difficulties which were thrown in the way of the negotiation by Austria and Holland; and to be convinced, that the peace of Utrecht was the generous labour and gift of England.

From the peace of Utrecht to the war of the Austrian succession, during the long interval of thirty years, peace continued uninterrupted between the rival countries. They were even, during a considerable portion of that period, connected by treaty. Whatever might be the opinions of some of the enlightened politicians of England, about the wisdom and benefit of this union, there can be no doubt but France reaped the fruits of this harvest.

It is true, by the treaty of Vienna, concluded in 1732, England resumed her ancient connexions with Austria ; but so little did France suffer from it, that only three years after, in 1735, she found herself in a state to commence and prosecute one of the most successful wars she ever undertook against the House of Austria ; and to retain, not only without the opposition, but actually with the mediation of Great Britain, the important acquisition of Lorraine. France profited more than she had any reason to expect ; and more, beyond doubt, than she expected, from that invincible dislike to war, which characterized the administration of Sir Robert Walpole.

The part which England took in the succession of Austria, was not only justified by the call of immediate interest, but by the absolute necessity of opposing a counterpoise to the enterprises of France, and supporting the Imperial House, threatened with immediate ruin. The plans of France to destroy this ancient rival of its conti-

nternal power are well known; and it may be left to any impartial judge to decide, whether it was for the interest of Europe that those plans should be executed. The assistance which Austria derived from England, in this critical instance, must be considered, agreeably to the soundest principles of federative policy, as an essential advantage for all states. The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle placed this truth in a commanding point of view. It is a most remarkable circumstance, that England, on that occasion, renounced the advantages she might have claimed from France, which Europe would have regarded with an eye of indifference, to seize those in which, with Europe, she took a common interest. She relinquished her conquests in America, she restored the important acquisition of Cape Breton, solely to compel France to abandon the Low Countries. The only advantage England derived from this war, was the preservation, as completely as it could be enforced, of the *status quo* in Europe.

The war which from 1755 to 1763 desolated every quarter of the globe, owed its origin to two causes extremely different. The one was the disputes which arose between France and England with respect to the boundaries of their settlements in North America; the other was the coalition of all the great continental powers against the King of Prussia. I will not decide, nor even examine who were the aggressors in the first instance; our concern is with things, not with men: indi-

vidual actions, as deserving praise or blame, form no subject of our consideration; our business is with the effects and result of those actions on the political system, and the general interest of the federative constitution.

If in this point of view we consider the seven years war, we find ourselves compelled to admit, that the object with which France commenced it, was as directly in opposition to the advantage, nay, to the general security of Europe, as the part which England took was in strict conformity to the principles of political equilibrium. In the war for the Austrian succession, England supported that monarchy against France and Prussia; in the present she supported Prussia against France and Austria. Each was equally well-timed, equally wise and salutary. The preservation of Prussia was not less interesting to Europe, than the preservation of Austria. The part which England acted in the seven years war confirmed and sealed her pretensions to the honourable title of protectress and guardian of the federative system of Europe, against every attack, from whatever quarter it came, and to whatever object directed.

This war, between France and England, bore, it must be confessed, a different aspect. It was on the point of annihilating the power of France in North America; it weakened her marine, and gave her rival for a time the uncontested empire of the seas. But these consequences, which in fact France could attribute only to herself, did

not directly affect Europe. They could not be placed in the balance against the beneficent influence of her co-operation with Prussia, and the advantages resulting to the continent; they did not affect France in her federative capacity, nor considered as a counterbalance in the general system of European politics, but solely and simply in her individual quality, and as the rival of England. It is extremely natural that France should look upon the seven years war as the most disastrous she ever experienced. It is that which excited and carried to excess jealousy, hatred, and all those hostile passions which so often set nations in array one against another. The peace of 1762 is that unpardonable crime which never finds grace in the eyes of French politicians. This is the true object of their eternal and irreconcilable animosity; here is the source of all their outcries against the pride and tyranny of Britain. Leaving them to complain, which, in despite of later successes, they have not failed and still continue to do, I would ask, What are these complaints to other states, how is Europe affected by them? has France been deprived of her rank and influence in the general system? has she lost her frontiers? was she deprived of security, divested of all means, interior and exterior, of defence? did she cease to be a maritime power? did she find herself without ships, without commerce, without colonies? Did England, rising on the ruins of her rival, dictate laws to Europe? did she destroy, did she threaten the political

equilibrium? No; nothing of the kind. So far from it, that very equilibrium, towards the close of the eighteenth century, was more perfect and more secure than at any former period whatever. France remained, what she ever had been, one of the first continental powers, and in the very first war she engaged in with England, proved that she had not lost her claim to being one of the first naval powers.

This war, the last before the revolution, raised the marine of France almost to an equality with that of England, proved it by splendid victories, and tore from England her most flourishing colonies. It must be confessed, that narrow and malicious policy, of which a monopolizing spirit constitutes the whole wisdom, which grounds its affluence on the wants of others, and by which the sovereigns of so many states have been seduced and chained, never received so complete and disgraceful an overthrow as in the result and effects of the American war. Agreeably to these narrow notions, it was to be the complete ruin of England; on the contrary, it became the epoch of her true greatness. But whatever may be the distant and yet unforeseen effects of this war, did its immediate consequences answer the expectations of those by whom it was commenced? In conformity with the general rules of political and trading interest, France attained all it was possible to attain from such a war: nay, she became a gainer in more important concerns. Her marine

experienced a new organization, her fleets rivalled those of England; and the honour of her flag was restored in every part of the world. The peace of 1783 was an ample compensation for the disgrace she had experienced in that of 1763.

If we take the pains to compare this historical sketch with the principles lately advanced, the following deductions will be readily admitted :

First, That the principal wars which have taken place between France and England, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, have not directly concerned the federative system of Europe, since they had in view objects immediately affecting those two states, either exclusively, as in that of 1778, or conjunctively, as in 1763. Those objects were the respective extension or limitation of the colonial and commercial system.

Secondly, That in several of these wars, and particularly in that of the Spanish succession, that of the Austrian succession, and in the seven years war, the equilibrium of Europe was either more or less threatened by France, while it was protected and restored by England.

Thirdly, That in none of these wars did Europe run any risk, either of seeing the legitimate influence of France destroyed or diminished, so as to affect the general interest; or of witnessing the undue and disproportioned ascendancy of England in the federative system.

What then, I would ask, becomes of all those accusations, collected by the spirit of party, to

represent England as an inextricable labyrinth of intrigue and cabal, versatility and systematic perfidy? Where are those wars she has excited in Europe, those alliances, in which she became a party merely to dissolve them, those false combinations of interest and power she has introduced, those partial and ephemeral balances of power contrary to the principles of the general balance, all of which have been urged against her with such bitterness of reproach? The history of the eighteenth century maintains a total silence on these offences. The British government has kept one object, and one only, full in view, that of opposing a vigorous and active resistance to the enterprising ambition of France. The means of accomplishing this point have varied with circumstances. When France was connected with Prussia, England made a common cause with the House of Austria. When France joined its interests with those of Austria, England declared for Prussia. The federative situation of England has always been in opposition to that of France. The object and plan of France, in all the wars of the last century, has been to effect a revolution in the federative system. In the war of the Spanish succession it was the aggrandizement of the House of Bourbon; in the war of the Austrian succession, the overthrow of the Germanic system of power; and in the seven years war, the destruction of the King of Prussia.

The object and plan of England in each of these wars has been to prevent a revolution in the federative system, to maintain it such as it existed, and to repair the balance when France laboured to destroy it. Whether her conduct in this respect was influenced by a disinterested zeal for the public good, by motives of private interest, or by hatred and jealousy of France, it is of little importance to examine. The effect has been the same: and if we are disposed to make that a subject of reproach to her, which she shares in common with all states, great and small, “ her having pursued, with perseverance and uniformity, the present interest of her power;” it is no less certain, that, in virtue of her particular situation, her *distinct* interest has ever proved, at the same time, the *general* interest of all powers, that of the maintenance and preservation of the political equilibrium of Europe.

In the act of accusation against England we find another grievance inserted, which, like the rest, disappears as soon as the grounds on which it stands are destroyed; but it has been urged with such frequency and force as to demand a particular explanation: I mean that respecting subsidies. “ England has made all parts of Europe successively feel the weight of its assistance.” If this singular expression is not devoid of sense, it must mean that England has by means of its subsidies exacted, or, to find a word better adapted to the terms of accusation, has constrained the states of

Europe to undertake wars in despite of themselves, against their interest and contrary to their desire.

In that crowd of common-place assertion and declamation, which, in a superficial and credulous age, are transmitted from writer to writer, there are some so futile and trivial, that it might almost excite a blush to submit them to a rigorous examination. In this class must be ranged all that is advanced with respect to the influence of subsidies, on the origin and prolongation of wars. That a petty prince, incapable of making war on his own account, regulating his movements by the policy of the greater states, preferring money to every other consideration, yet having no means of acquiring it, with scarcely more troops than are necessary for his personal security, should be tempted to sell those troops for ready money, and engage in enterprises in which he has no interest, or which are contrary to his interest; this is a possible case; nay, we have seen instances of it. But when we reflect only for a moment what must be the expenses of a war to any of the great powers of Europe (and I understand here, expenses, in the common sense of the word; I speak not of those dreadful sacrifices and innumerable dangers with which all the gold in the universe cannot be put into competition), when we consider the mere pecuniary expenses, even of a single campaign, if we enter ever so little into the spirit of calculation, we shall never persuade ourselves that any government would ever engage in a war,

solely from the inducement of a subsidy. Never did subsidies discharge the moiety, I am speaking with moderation, of the expenses incurred on such an occasion; never was a war undertaken, or protracted, from the sole object of receiving subsidies. The most absurd administration, the narrowest policy, never reached such a degree of blindness and madness. Whatever mean idea may be entertained of the maxims of sovereigns, and of the principles and views of their ministers, it would be contrary to reason to ascribe to them measures contradictory to their immediate interest, and inconsistent with their present advantage.

No power can, with any prospect of success, offer subsidies to another, except, independently of the connexion they are about to frame, they are united by a more powerful interest, and attracted to a common object. Such is the history of all the subsidies that have taken place in the eighteenth century. Subsidies never produced the original plan, they merely facilitated the execution. To support a war, troops and money are necessary. It is in the natural order of things that two allies, of which one possesses a superfluity of troops, and the other a superfluity of money, should reciprocally furnish each other with what is respectively wanted. This exchange of means is the result of a policy as legitimate as it is well understood: it is the triumph of a sound federative constitution; since whatever completes and facilitates the means of maintaining the balance,

and resisting those who are disposed to disturb it, must ever be considered as a decisive advantage to the general system.

We must therefore consider the manner in which this grievance connects itself with the other charges exhibited against England, to determine whether it be justly founded. If the part she has taken in the general system of European policy be culpable; if her interference in continental affairs have proved injurious to the continent; if she have deranged the equilibrium, and harassed, oppressed, and enslaved her neighbours; then the subsidies she has lavished through Europe have been its bane, and richly deserve execration. But if, on the contrary, she have protected the weak and oppressed from the powerful and ambitious; if she have maintained the equilibrium, if her efforts have always co-operated with the true interests of the continent, then these very subsidies have been a benefit to those who partook of them, and even to those who had no share in them; and those alone, who have so often seen their ambition repressed by the interference of Great Britain, have a right to complain of the weight of her subsidies.

My design in the present discussion has not been to undertake an apology for the politics and administrations of England, from William III. to the present day. Let him who thus thinks consider the nature of the task before me. Opposing a writer, who, with most of his bro-

ther politicians, the moment England is named, is but too disposed to forget every principle of justice, and even those which he advances himself, the simple exposition of truth has under my hands necessarily assumed the character, and consequently the tone and form, of a professed apology. My only object has been, to exhibit in its true colours and undisputed relations, the political system of Europe, as it existed previously to the French revolution. To attain this object, it became absolutely necessary to examine with considerable detail the situation of that power, which, if the French writers may be credited, has been the source of all the troubles, all the wars, all the disorders, and all the misfortunes of Europe. It became necessary to prove, as well by a complete survey of the foundation of these grievances, as by the irresistible evidence of historical facts, that England, at the commencement of the revolution, occupied her proper station in the federative system only for her own security and the safety of others; that her influence was unattended with danger to all the states of Europe, and even to France itself, her ancient and her only rival; that she was neither disposed nor competent to derange the balance of Europe; and that, on the contrary, during the whole century, in every circumstance of importance, she has proved herself one of the most powerful ramparts and most constant protectors of that very *equilibrium*.

So far Mr. Gentz in his own words, who con-

cludes this part of his work with desiring to impress the great object of all his reflections; namely, that notwithstanding some particular defects, the federative constitution of Europe was such as might reasonably be expected, and such as answers with admirable exactness the description given by Mr. Hauterive of what he conceives such a system ought to be. Still it is not denied, but it was susceptible of improvement. Many important points, as well in war as in peace, had not been sufficiently explained, or regulated by the common agreement of nations. But these deficiencies by no means authorized a fulminating proscription. Remedies were within reach; there arose a flattering prospect in the progress of improvement, the advancement of social cultivation, in the advantages already attained, and in those confidently promised. This became more obvious in the last twenty years preceding the revolution. We were clearly reaching an epoch of great general change and improvement.

He then submits to his readers the infallible symptoms.

**First.** All governments had acquired the conviction that there existed in the interior cultivation of their states a more abundant source of power, riches, influence, true glory, nay of exterior splendour, than in all the aggrandizements and all the acquisitions procured by arms or negotiation.

This doctrine was not new, but it was a no-

velty to find it introduced into the cabinets of princes. Very sound ideas of the nature and tendency of wars generally prevailed, and succeeded the barbarous maxims of our ancestors. Enlightened principles of commercial policy successfully combated ancient prejudices. The folly of monopolies was shaken off. Exclusive dominion in distant parts of the world was no longer considered of supreme importance. Colonial possessions were regarded in the proper point of view. The rivalry of the commercial nations still subsisted, but took a different direction, and, rejecting phantoms, aspired at a durable reality. Here was an obvious approach to the blessings of a general peace. Wars of ambition were condemned; the sentence was suspended over wars of commerce.

Secondly. At the same time, the mass of the people in the greater part of Europe had become more enlightened, and had acquired a method of thinking at once more tolerant and more pacific. Their eyes were opened to their true interests. It was not such or such a war, that became the object of their hatred, but all wars. The ideas that were formed of the natural relations, rights, and duties of states, were clearer and more determined. The science of public right kept pace with the general improvement. The maxims were not always practised, but were always revered. Had governments been so disposed, they could not have resisted the spirit of the

age ; but, in fact, their interest was concerned in its encouragement. Without asserting that the hearts of men were purer, and their actions radically more moral, it must be insisted that the principles of actions universally admitted, promulgated, and honoured, had never been so truly meritorious and praiseworthy.

To select for the subject of the bitterest complaint, a period thus conspicuous for the most brilliant hopes ; to represent it as divested of every trace of public right and administrative maxims, is surely the most paradoxical attempt in the annals of political quixotism. The united eloquence and logic of ancient and modern sophists must have been foiled in such an undertaking. Before the incorruptible tribunal of history could lend its sanction to such a representation, the books, the archives, the very memory of man, must be obliterated and destroyed. No, her immortal pen will deliver down to posterity a very different account. Europe after the peace of Westphalia, and Europe in the year 1786 ; a look, a single look upon this striking contrast annihilates for ever volumes of calumnious declamation.

Suppose in 1786 it had been proposed to a friend of humanity, an enlightened man, not insensible of the defects of the federative system, to destroy at a single blow all the subsisting relations of Europe, with the view of improving its social constitution, a smile of contempt or a cry of

indignation had been the only answer. This blow has been felt ; this cruel destruction has taken place. From the ruins of the ancient edifice to draw forth materials for the construction of the new one, is now the great problem which exercises the sagacity of politicians. But it is necessary to correct the idea that this event was necessary, nay, further, that it was useful and beneficent. The malady is ascertained, but a false notion of its origin, raised in credulity and supported by sophisms and untruths, has produced the dangerous opinion, that it may be considered as a salutary crisis, as the unavoidable passage to a better order of things. So long as this illusion subsists, remedies are useless, and the case becomes desperate.

## CHAP. IV.

*Refutation of the supposed commercial or economical Grievances.*

IN the close of his work, Mr. Gentz undertakes the vindication of Great Britain, on the grounds which he had reserved for a more particular examination; having already given a satisfactory answer to the idle catalogue of political grievances. The reader will not be sorry to learn, that he is left to speak for himself through the whole of this important and interesting discussion.

The complaints against England are at once so acrimonious and so numerous, and may with so much propriety be considered as the echo of a very predominant party on the continent, that it becomes essential to the completion of my undertaking to give them a very strict examination. This I shall now do. My former view of the state of England was purely and exclusively political; the present may by way of distinction be termed economical. This, it is presumed, will determine whether the industry, the riches, and the power of England are, as is boldly asserted, in open contradiction to the industry, riches, and power of Europe, or whether, as I apprehend will appear to be the case, they are such as enable her to occupy her proper

ration in the federative system, with honour to herself and with advantage to Europe, and consequently are highly necessary, useful, and beneficent.

The author of the State of France in the Year Eight, has advanced the following charges against England, in which he has collected all that has ever been urged, or that ever can be urged, against the maritime and commercial preponderancy of that country.

1. It is in the celebrated Navigation Act we must look for the source of the oppressive superiority of Great Britain in her commerce and marine. This unjust and hostile law has placed English industry in a permanent state of war with the industry of every other country.

2. England has necessarily laboured to procure for herself in every part of the world, commercial establishments, colonies, factories, or exclusive privileges. Too well has she succeeded, at the cost and ruin of other countries, in putting herself in possession of all the branches of industry, and of every source of riches and power, commercial or territorial, in every quarter of the globe, inhabited or uninhabited.

3. By these enterprises, and the monstrous monopoly exercised in the despotism of the produce of her industry, she has annihilated, or at least palsied, through Europe, the internal industry of all other countries; she has impeded their progress, she has laden them with the most

oppressive tributes, she has covered them with indelible disgrace, by restraining them from the free exercise of their respective powers and forces. This tyranny, pecuniary and military, is become, by natural progression and necessary consequence, the foundation of her political tyranny.

The fourth charge, that of having invented a new maritime code, calculated solely for her own benefit, and hostile to the other powers of Europe, is not discussed in this work by Mr. Gentz, but will find an answer in that part of its continuation, which examines the relative situation of the neutral powers.

### I. *On the Navigation Act.*

Mr. H.'s reflections on this act clearly prove the necessity of exhibiting its contents and explaining its meaning, before we presume to develope its character and effects. For were this statute as well understood out of England, as from its celebrity in the history of political economy it ought to be, what writer would venture to call it a permanent conspiracy against the industry of all other countries?

The principal heads of this law are these : 1. No vessel can trade either with English colonies, or with any English establishment, or upon the coasts of England, unless the owner, captain, and three fourths of the crew be English. 2. No foreign vessel can import into England any other merchandise, than the actual pro-

duce of the country to which the owner, captain, and three fourths of the crew shall belong. 3. There are certain articles of foreign produce, which are prohibited from importation, either in English or foreign bottoms. 4. No fish can be imported into England, except taken by English fishermen, and conveyed in English bottoms. This act was passed in 1651, under the Protectorate of Cromwell, and confirmed in 1660, by Charles II. Not to omit any material part, I shall mention a circumstance, which seems entirely to have escaped our author. The code of prohibitory laws passed in England against foreign commerce, looks considerably further than the Navigation Act. Many later statutes, by very heavy duties on articles not prohibited by that act, have thrown fresh obstacles in the way of the foreign merchant.

If, in the first place, we examine these laws under a legal view, it must be admitted that every state has a right to pass them, every government is fully authorized to adopt such measures as, without a positive infraction of the rights of other nations, seem best calculated for the promotion of the industry of its own country. No state has a right to demand of any other, the admission of its vessels, merchandise or merchants, and still less, an admission free and unincumbered. It is upon these indisputable principles, that, down to our days, the commercial policy of Europe has been regulated. All states without exception

have endeavoured to animate or sustain national industry by prohibitory laws on importation and exportation, by customs and excises, and by every species of limitation and control. Whatever may have been the opinions of men conversant in the science of public economy with respect to the *advantages* of such regulations, never have the regulations themselves been considered as infringements on the rights of nations, as positive offences, as usurpations, and as crimes. Nay, on the contrary, the governments of Europe have not only, without exception, adopted the system of prohibitory laws, but have, as it were in a spirit of competition, given them every improvement and extension of which they were possibly susceptible. If every country of Europe has not its Navigation Act, it must not be imputed to a principle of generosity, or to any scrupulous solicitude for the interest of its neighbours; but to the impracticability of the scheme, or to the want of vigour and foresight in the national character. Let us only consider with an impartial eye the different prohibitory laws which fetter foreign commerce in other states, and we shall be compelled to acknowledge, that many are at least as oppressive in their effects, and as harsh, exclusive, intolerant, and hostile in their principles, as the Navigation Act of England.

This incontestable right which each state possesses of employing for the furtherance of internal industry every expedient which does not posi-

tively infringe on the rights of other states, acquires, if possible, still greater force and evidence, when the measure adopted not only advances its industry, but establishes its security. A country whose safety depends on the maintenance of a considerable army, has a well-established right of preventing by severe prohibitory laws any of its subjects from passing into the service of foreign powers. A country whose produce of corn is inadequate to the consumption of its inhabitants, by the same right may rigorously prohibit its exportation. A state which without the aid of a considerable naval force would be unable to preserve its safety and independence, has a well-established right of passing laws to regulate its commerce and dealing with other countries, with a direct view to those great objects of all government. England stands in this latter predicament. Her security rests upon her marine: without an extensive navigation there can be no marine. It became therefore the business and the duty of the English legislature to extend its navigation to the greatest possible degree.

This is sufficient to prove that the Navigation Act, which was, in fact, merely a regulation of internal policy, can never be considered as an offensive measure to all other nations, much less a permanent conspiracy against their rights.

But I shall be asked, Is this regulation compatible with the principles of a wise and liberal policy? Could not English industry have been

animated by other and less violent measures? And admitting the legality of the Navigation Act, and its advantageous tendency to England, has it not been a perpetual source of discontent to other countries? The solution of these questions will put us in possession of the true character of this act.

Generally speaking, all laws which impede the free and natural progress of human industry, which prescribe a forced direction, which compel it into a course into which it would not have gone voluntarily, or at least would never have pursued exclusively; all laws which promote industry only by restraining liberty, are, without exception, pernicious. In this class must be placed the Navigation Act. It constrains the inhabitants of England to fetch in their own ships the productions of foreign countries, unless they will submit to a total privation of them. It constrains them consequently to devote to foreign commerce a greater stock of labour, and a larger capital, than would have been necessary in the natural course of things, if importation had been left free and unshackled. It compels them to renounce the benefit of foreign industry, in cases where its employment is manifestly more advantageous than their own. It prevents them from purchasing in foreign markets articles which they could there purchase considerably cheaper than they can be procured at home. It hinders them from using foreign vessels for the transport of

their merchandise, in cases where the freight would have been considerably less, and consequently raises the price of the commodity. Under a general view of political economy this act has no claims of exemption from the proscription which strikes at all prohibitory laws.

All this is true; but circumstances may arise, when it becomes the duty of a wise government, to give up certain principles of public economy, and sacrifice to the pressing exigencies of an important interest, whether permanent or temporary, the maxims and considerations of the administrative science. It is to circumstances of this nature the Navigation Act owes its existence. If England were disposed to preserve herself in balance with the great continental powers, to a certain point only; to maintain her independance, and guard her shores from invasion; it became necessary to bring her marine to the greatest pitch of perfection. Such an object justifies laws directly prohibitory. The Act of Navigation is a law of that stamp and class, and it has produced the effects desired. To give employment and energy to the British marine, it has obliged this nation to use their own ships, their own sailors, and their own capitals in the cultivation of all those branches of commerce which would otherwise have fallen, in great part, or exclusively, into the hands of foreigners. It has compelled commercial industry to become, more completely and more rapidly than it would have

otherwise done, a nursery for the national marine, and consequently one of the most powerful bulwarks of the country, one of the strongest pledges of its safety, one of the first instruments of its grandeur.

But it never should be forgotten, that, agreeably to the true principles of political economy, the operation of this act was so far from being a direct advantage to English industry, that it was on the contrary a limitation of that industry, and consequently a sacrifice which England voluntarily imposed upon herself, to fix upon a solid base the first and greatest of all interests. For under the immediate view of industry and commerce, the true advantage of a state rests on a concurrence of the widest extent, on the unrestrained liberty of purchasing as cheap and selling as dear as is rendered practicable by its situation and address. The Navigation Act was an outrage on this liberty, it destroyed or repressed this concurrence. So far from its being a law *directly advantageous* to the external commerce of England, it was a law *indirectly disadvantageous*.

Whoever then contemplates under a true point of view the interests of national industry and the sources of national opulence, will never seek in the navigation laws of England for the foundation of its commercial grandeur. If its commerce has spread out to such a wonderful extent, it has not been owing to its Navigation Act, but

in despite of that very act. It is to causes of a different nature that we must ascribe the unrivalled progress of British trade. The Navigation Act did not create that trade. Had any other state, not possessing the advantages, disposition, and natural resources of England, devised, and put into vigorous execution such a law, it had been the immediate signal for the destruction of its commerce, the extinction of its industry, and the decay of its resources.

If we have proved that the Navigation Act did not produce for England the effects ascribed to it by a blind jealousy, or a purposed malignant representation, it only remains to consider how far it has been really prejudicial to other states. For though it cannot be disputed that the British government has a right to pass such a law, still it might be attended with pernicious effects to other countries, and without being formally unjust might deserve to be called a hostile and offensive law, a law manifestly in opposition to the interests of all the rest of Europe.

The Navigation Act affects only one branch of commerce; that by which certain states transport into another country the productions and manufactures of foreign countries. This carrying trade was the source of the amazing riches of the Dutch; and they were the only people upon whom this act had a direct operation. It shut against them all the markets of England; but its consequences were bounded by this effect. It did

not touch the direct commerce of Europe, it in no degree affected the traffic carried on by its different states with their respective natural productions and manufactures. If other laws passed in England have restrained and shackled commercial liberty, it has been the same case with all the powers acting on a system of mercantile policy: the Act of Navigation became a matter of indifference to all, who were not concerned in the carrying trade; nor can it be considered as essentially prejudicial even to them. At worst, it excluded them from the markets of a single country only, and the rest of Europe afforded them ample compensation. History will inform us that neither Holland, Hamburg, nor the other states which cultivated this branch of commerce, experienced any visible shock or sensible decline from the operation of this act.

Its adversaries tell us that if every government was determined to pass a similar act against all other nations, it would prove the destruction of the carrying trade. The observation is undoubtedly just; but it is only on one supposition, and that grossly improbable, that this threatened evil could take place: namely, either that all governments conjunctively must have become incapable of judging of their own interests, or have concurred in making a sacrifice of them for the absurd pleasure of injuring their neighbours. For it cannot be too often repeated, that the government which establishes a monopoly is always the

first to suffer by its baneful influence. To prevent such a law from becoming reprehensible, nay, absurd and unpardonable, it is necessary that motives of the greatest weight be brought forward in its support. It is in addition necessary that the state by which it is passed should possess peculiar power, and be endued with abundant resources. It is England alone which unites these two indispensable conditions. All other states are deficient either in adequate motives, or the means requisite for its enforcement. Most states are deficient in both.

From the preceding reflections it will follow, first, that the Navigation Act has limited foreign industry in a single point only, in having excluded those nations who are concerned in the carrying trade from some of the principal markets of that commerce. Secondly, That it is not in this act that we must seek the source of the commercial grandeur and riches of England. It possessed, in common with every monopoly, the disadvantage of prejudicing internal industry; and, if that did actually prosper in an eminent degree, it is owing to other causes. Thirdly, That if there is a view in which this act may be considered as a wise law, it is in its having sacrificed the ordinary maxims of political economy for the purpose of extending internal industry, on which depend the defence, security, and independence of England. Contemplated in this light of policy, it may have been proved indirectly advan-

stageous to all the other elementary branches of national grandeur and prosperity. Fourthly : Were this act an imprudent measure, it deserved not on that account the imputation of being unjust. It was a step of internal policy, of which no one state is obliged to render an account to any other. Fifthly : If by prohibitory regulations on importation and exportation, by heavy taxes on foreign produce, and by other proceedings of mercantile policy, England has gone beyond her Navigation Act, and shackled industry, internal or external, in a degree and extent not justified by any motives of weightier consideration, then in that case beyond a doubt she is culpable. But no state in Europe has a right to reproach her, since all have, without exception, adopted the same mercantile policy. Besides, as it is in England that the true principles of public economy have been best developed and most successfully practised, there is a reasonable presumption, that she is the most disengaged from every narrow maxim of a false commercial policy ; and, in fact, this presumption is supported by repeated proofs during the last twenty years.

It is not then in the commercial legislation of England that we find any ground for those murmurs, which reach us on every side, against her commercial tyranny. Should they not be destitute of foundation, it must be sought in other quarters.

The monopoly of English establishments out

of Europe, from the moment that the human powers and social and civil cultivation reached that degree of improvement, to which, for three centuries, they have been incessantly advancing: from that moment there necessarily sprung up amongst cultivated nations a desire of forming permanent connexions with the most distant countries of the globe. Necessity, the love of enjoyment, the spur of curiosity, a greater disposition to labour, motives of every kind, some originating in reason, others in passion, concurred in giving this desire an incalculable degree of intensity. What was at first abandoned to the temerity of a few adventurers, became by degrees the object of systematic activity; what had been regarded as superfluous, soon appeared indispensable, and luxury, losing its name, a necessary want and demand. The productions of the most distant countries were converted into objects of prime necessity. Men found in the sea a country, in navigation an exclusive occupation, and in colonial establishments a branch of ordinary industry.

This progressive developement of industry, this endless multiplication of the objects, the instruments, and the effects of human industry; all this is in the course and order of our destiny. Cultivation and improvement are not the exclusive possession of a privileged people, but formed to reach and embrace, in due time, every part of the globe. Under this point of view, the history

of the European establishments, notwithstanding the evils with which they were accompanied, boasts many considerations of splendour and advantage. Viewed in other respects, it becomes confused, problematical, and obscure. Why, it may be asked, should unheard-of cruelties and violence disgrace every step which civilized countries have taken in these uncultivated regions ? Why were millions doomed to perish, that a happier generation might rise on their ruins ? Why were the bloodiest wars, slavery, oppression, and extortion, made the foundation of the noblest superstructure ever raised by men ? The understanding is lost in these inexplicable contradictions, while it considers the greatness of the object proposed, the indignity of the means employed.

What appears, with a few exceptions, clear and indisputable, is, that violence and injustice have been the first and only titles of all European establishments in the other parts of the world. Portuguese, Spaniards, Dutch, English, and French, all are in this respect equally culpable. No nation has a right to reproach another. I insist further, that no European whatever is justified in accusing the commercial nations with the cruelties they inflicted on the original inhabitants. For if we enjoy, more or less, the multiplied advantages derived from those establishments, and are unwilling to renounce them, we clearly partake of the responsibility attached to the enjoyment, and in some measure of that which accom-

panied the original acquisition. Besides, the majority of the evils introduced on that occasion subsist no longer but in the page of history. More liberal and humane maxims have succeeded to those of the first invaders ; and as, in despite of philanthropical declamation, there is but one opinion subsisting amongst cultivated nations of the necessity of maintaining the system hitherto adopted in due vigour, it only remains with us to wish, that the enlightened spirit of the age may introduce amongst the nations subjected to our wants, real or imaginary, that wise and temperate regard to their destiny and condition, without which neither peace, justice, or common interest, can exist.

The question before us is properly this : if it is necessary that Europeans should extend their sway over the other parts of the world, if it is necessary that a commercial and maritime system should establish permanent connexions between those countries and our own, what are the conditions of this dominion and this system, which harmonize best with the general interests of Europe ?

It has been customary to answer the question upon this principle : that the most favourable situation of things would be that, in which all the maritime powers should possess, as equally as possible, the advantages of colonial establishments and commerce ; that is, in other words, to say, that if any one of these powers should acquire a

decided ascendancy, more particularly if it should obtain exclusive dominion in so vast a sphere of power and activity, there would thence necessarily result a monopoly in the sale of colonial produce, a monopoly whose disastrous effects would be felt by all Europe.

I am at present disposed to consider this opinion as well-founded, and on that supposition shall examine, with reference to the complaints urged against England, how the dominion of the Europeans was shared out in the East and West Indies, and in America, previously to the revolution.

The largest and finest portion of India was in the hands of the English, where they had founded the most powerful empire known in that climate since the decline of that of the Mogul. It was from the hands of their agents we received the most precious productions of that country; and it was brought to us in their own vessels. In addition they had opened a prodigious trade with the more eastern parts of Asia, particularly with China, whose tea, having become in Europe an article of the first necessity, formed a very lucrative branch of English commerce. Notwithstanding, before the revolution, their dominion in the East Indies, as well as their commerce in those seas, was far from being exclusive. France, Holland, Portugal, and Denmark, had a considerable share both in the one and the other. From the mouth of the Indus to Japan, there was

not a coast, an island, a port, a settlement, which the ships of those countries did not visit. They possessed factories, cities, provinces, which might be placed in competition with those of England. It was even dubious till the close of the war of 1756, whether the English or the French should bear sway in Indostan. The ascendancy of Holland in the seas of India was to the full as important as that of England on the continent, and Batavia had risen to splendour before the name of Calcutta was known. The Dutch found in the exclusive occupation of the spice-islands an inexhaustible source of riches, and shared with England the trade of China. They possessed that of Japan without competition. England, it is true, upon the whole, had a preponderancy in the East Indies, but enjoyed neither absolute dominion nor exclusive commerce.

In the West Indies the division was more equal, and the balance, if it inclined at all, was certainly in favour of France. St. Domingo alone was worth all the Caribbee islands taken together; and, besides that, she was possessed of other rich and flourishing settlements. If in the gulf of Mexico Spain was not equally powerful with England, that circumstance was not owing to the the extent of the English possessions, since Cuba alone may be estimated at thrice their value; but it sprung from the defects or weakness of the Spanish government. Holland, Sweden, and Denmark, possessed also valuable settlements in the Caribbees; and surely

it would favour of madness to assert, that the possessors of Jamaica bore an absolute sway in that immense archipelago, or that they were able to exercise in Europe the monopoly of West India commerce.

The case was the same on the continent of America. From the peace of 1783, England retained in North America only a rude, uncultivated, and steril country. The vast regions of South America, with the immense treasures they inclose, belonged either to Spain or Portugal. All that part of North America on this side the river St. Lawrence, which did not belong to the United States, was under the French or Spanish dominion. Judging from her territorial possessions, or from her political power and grandeur, in America England cannot be placed higher than a power of the third rank.

It becomes then clear, that, before the French revolution, England possessed no more than any other power of Europe an exclusive dominion in the other parts of the world; that France, England, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, and Sweden, had their share, more or less, in those islands and territories which acknowledged European jurisdiction; that upon the whole, the share of England was neither the largest nor the most important; that the trade with the East and West Indies, and America, as well as the advantage of supplying Europe with the products of those countries, was divided amongst the maritime

nations; and that if before the revolution England had surpassed her rivals in colonial commerce, a circumstance which, with regard to France will admit of a doubt, the cause does not lie in monopoly, nor even in the superiority of her colonial settlements; it must be sought elsewhere.

But before we proceed to the examination of this subject, it will be necessary to view the changes which have taken place since the revolution. On the continent of America things remain as they were; with the exception of Surinam, England made no conquest; and France, Portugal, and Spain, lost no part of their ancient possessions. In the West Indies England took from the French Martinique, and some less considerable islands, from the Spaniards Trinidad, and from the Dutch all their settlements. France acquired the entire possession of St. Domingo, of which she before possessed only the best cultivated moiety. It is highly probable, on a peace, if France will consent to some sacrifices, England will relinquish the greater part, or perhaps the whole of her conquests. But at present, the acquisitions of France, both in actual value and extent of territory, may be considered as equivalent to those of England.

This is certainly not the case in the East Indies. There English ascendancy is undisputed. The most valuable possessions of Holland, their spice-islands and Ceylon, have fallen into their hands;

The only power in the peninsula, who was able to meet them in army, has experienced disgrace, defeat, and death, in the trial. The peace of Amiens having confirmed the power of England in India, the great question we are to meet is this: how far the general interest of Europe is concerned in the particular preponderance of any one nation in territorial power and colonial settlements. I return to the words of Mr. Gentz.

If these distant possessions have been, or can ever become, a direct source of power, then it can never be a matter of indifference to whom they belong. For becoming thus the instruments of great political influence, they may essentially modify the subsisting relations of the European states, and establish or derange the federative constitution, as they are engrossed by one power, or distributed among several. Then they must be considered as provinces, in the proper sense of the word, as real accessions of territory to the states which own them; and the equilibrium of Europe, in such a case, would be as sensibly affected by the conquest of St. Domingo, or the Mysore, as by that of Holland and Italy.

It is not, however, thus with these possessions; never have they proved to any country an immediate source of revenue, consequently not of grandeur or political power. The expenses of their administration absorb, and often surpass, their productive income. It is a well-known fact, that every East India and West India company,

founded upon territorial dominion, has either been totally ruined, or with difficulty escaped that fate. That vast and fertile territory which now forms in North America such a flourishing state, did not produce so much to the British government as a single square mile in England. The slightest inspection of the India budget, presented annually to Parliament, will prove the little value of India possessions considered as territorial dominion. These conquerors, the objects of such envy, these successors of the Moguls, who rule over thirty millions of subjects, who govern the richest country of the globe, are accumulating debt upon debt, for the mere purpose of covering their expenses; instead of a surplus in their revenues, they are annually presented with a deficit. This extended empire would prove a burden to the country, if she did not find a compensation in that which constitutes the soul and essence of her greatness, I mean in the extension of her commerce. This is not the place for unfolding the causes of this singular phenomenon; they do not spring alone from accidental causes, but they are founded in the nature of the thing, and in the indispensable conditions of the administration of the territory distant from the centre of power. More or less, they will ever be found applicable to all territorial possessions situated out of Europe.

A dominion of this nature, then, will never have a considerable influence either upon the subsisting relation of the respective states, or upon the de-

tiny of Europe. Let the French, Dutch, or English reign alone and exclusively in the East or West Indies, in Africa and America, let them reign conjunctively, or let each of them be excluded from reigning; all this is a matter of indifference, so long as *reigning* is alone the question. Dominion becomes important, only as it connects itself with another advantage. This is commerce. It is commerce alone which gives colonies a value interesting to Europe. If by its foreign possessions, any European nation has procured for itself a considerable power, it follows, that these possessions must have given to the general commerce of that nation, or to some particular branches of it, an extension, which, without their aid, could not have been reached. To authorize any European state to complain of the dominion exercised by another, it is necessary that in the commerce founded upon this dominion, and without which it could not subsist, there should be proved something oppressive and injurious to the commerce of other nations.

On a more liberal consideration of the subject, every complaint against colonial dominion, considered as such, becomes senseless declamation, of which national jealousy constitutes the true motive.

How far may the exclusive possession of distant colonies be considered as advantageous, even under a commercial view? Cannot commerce more readily attain its perfection, without this exclusive possession, when its principles are ac-

knowledged, and its conditions, essential to its success, complied with? And if it has succeeded with that possession, shall we not rather say, that it was in despite of it, and not by its means? These are questions, which I shall not agitate here; I confine myself to the idea generally entertained of the influence of foreign possessions, or the prosperity and extension of external commerce. I ask, whether, in conformity with the opinion generally received, the actual grandeur, or, as it has been the custom to call it, the exclusive dominion of Great Britain, can in any manner be explained by the increase of colonial possessions, produced by the war of the revolution?

We have seen that it is only in the East Indies that there has been a real increase of British territory. Their acquisitions in the West Indies have not been such as could sensibly affect the balance of external trade. If the actual superiority of their commerce depends upon the magnitude of their possessions, it is in the East Indies we must look for an explication of the cause, and more particularly in their conquest over Tippoo Saib.

Hitherto it must be confessed, the effects of their triumphs in the Mysore have not been felt, and a very slight knowledge of the East India Company will satisfy us, that their conquests will not add much to the real riches of that body, nor give a new spring to their commercial activity. It is only under one point of view, that it will be advantageous to the possessors of Bengal; they

give a greater degree of security to their possessions. This acquisition may be considered, like all the other territorial property of England in the East, as an accidental consequence of that extension of commerce, which is one of the sources of English opulence. Considered in itself, that commerce might subsist in its full extent independently of the possession of such vast territories. If they have become necessary, it is owing to a false and barbarous policy, which has totally destroyed those connexions and relations which ought to have subsisted between Europe and India. It is owing to the respective founders of settlements, of whatever country, having known no other arts than those of violence and oppression, and having entailed on their successors the necessity of continuing forcible measures to support their unjust dominion. It is in vain then we shall seek in the conquest of the Mysore, an explanation of the commercial superiority of Great Britain ; it is unconnected with it. Ceylon indeed, and the Moluccas, seem to have a closer reference to it ; but it must be considered, that one branch only of trade is thereby added to English commerce ; and that one branch, however important it may be allowed, is, when it is placed in comparison with the others, of subordinate consideration. This will never solve the problem.

The commercial superiority of Great Britain arises from two causes totally distinct. One of these existed before the revolution ; the other owes

its existence to the situation in which all the commercial nations of Europe were placed by the revolution.

The incomparable industry of England, the extent of its capital, its astonishing progress in the mechanical arts, the perfection of its marine, the attention paid by Government to the true interests of the country, its admirable police, and its political and individual character : these constitute the first cause of the greatness of its external commerce. This principal cause subsists independently of any changes or revolutions which may happen to other parts of the world. It had shewn itself in its full extent and brilliancy before the war of the revolution broke out : from a variety of causes, of which the discussion is referred to another occasion, it was not in the power of that war to check or restrain it ; and the event stands forward as a phenomenon in the history of national industry and economy.

To this first positive cause of commercial superiority may be added a second, occurring in the course of the revolutionary war ; but which, when compared to the former, will deserve only to be regarded as negative. Through a series of misfortune, those nations who formerly shared with England the maritime and colonial commerce, found themselves reduced to total inactivity. France, but lately so powerful, saw her capital, manufactures, commerce, and marine, perish in the midst of anarchial convulsions ; her desolated

colonies exhibited the appearance of a heap of ruins; and St. Domingo, that sovereign of the Caribbee islands, was but a theatre of blood, a scene of desolation and misery. Holland was soon drawn into the horrid vortex of the revolution, and lost her commerce, the internal energy of government, her colonies, and marine. By one of those fatal contradictions engendered only by a revolutionary war, the most powerful ally of this state was compelled to co-operate directly in her ruin, to seize her ships wherever they were found sailing, and drive her from her most valuable settlements in both Indies. To avoid evils still more afflictive, Spain threw herself into the arms of France, and shared with her the dangers of a naval conflict, the stagnation of her commerce, the ruin of her finances, in a word, that collection of evils which effaced her from the list of maritime powers. It is true, the states of the second rank, and principally North America, filled up in some measure the vacancy occasioned by the inactivity of these three powers, but they could fill it only imperfectly; and much the larger share of trade in colonial produce became necessarily concentrated in the hands of the English.

Thus has been gradually formed what has been called the monopoly of their colonial commerce. It was their intrinsic and positive superiority, which existed previously to the revolution, and which had already given birth to absurd or unjust complaints, which was its primary and principal

cause. Without this all the states in Europe might have been totally ruined, together with their marine and colonies, and England, on that account, would never have reached her commercial superiority. But with this superiority, and the singular advantage of maintaining it in the midst of war uninjured and unimpaired, England saw her ancient rivals disappear one after the other, and remained alone upon the stage. Thus the misfortune of other states became, not the cause, but the accidental occasion, of a more considerable, or, properly speaking, a more sensible expansion of the internal principles of her greatness.

Now if what is very improperly called monopoly and exclusive dominion were really an essential evil to all nations, a question we propose very soon to examine, it would be equally absurd and unjust to represent it as a crime, perfidy, and atrocity of the people and government of Great Britain. Can that superiority before stated, which is the principle and cause of her commercial greatness, ever be seriously imputed as a criminal charge against that nation, which has had the address to acquire it, and against the government which has judiciously guarded and supported it? With respect to the second cause, as that can be considered only as the accidental occasion of this superiority, which had long existed, being more advantageously displayed, how is England responsible? Did she cause the French revolution? Was she the author of those evils which have de-

solated the interior of France ? Did she complete the ruin of the French colonies, and the destruction of the old government of Holland ? Did she form the alliance between Spain and France ? To this monopoly, as it is falsely called, she contributed only that cause which can never be made the subject of reproach ; the other cause was produced by circumstances which it was utterly impossible for her to foresee, to avert, or to direct.

When we take upon ourselves to examine the question, how far the exclusive commerce of which England is in possession, is prejudicial to the other states, we must carefully distinguish its effects upon those countries which are commercial, and such as are merely consumers.

To those nations, who, before the revolution, enjoyed a share in commerce of the colonial produce, the present state of things is certainly a serious evil. One of the most important branches of their industry is destroyed, and other branches, more or less connected with it, are effectually palsied. The sudden destruction of their whole colonial system has not only affected their exterior commerce and navigation ; it has struck at their home manufactures, affected the circulation of their specie, and reached all the sources of private riches, and many of public opulence. The ancient rivalry and concurrence was not only an advantage, but actually a want and necessity. In them, therefore, it becomes reasonable to represent the re-

establishment of this concurrence as an object of the first and most urgent necessity.

Very different is the case with that large part of Europe which may be considered as consumers in respect to colonial produce. The interesting consideration with them turns on the greater or less facility of procuring the enjoyment of those commodities at the cheapest rate. It is to them a matter of indifference whether these settlements, or the commerce arising from them, are shared out amongst many, or holden by a single power. The former is only advantageous to them as it affords the opportunity of procuring those commodities at a lower price, and the other can be considered as prejudicial only when it raises their price.

It is an opinion pretty generally circulated over Europe, that the same circumstances, which, during the war, have placed almost exclusively in the hands of the English the commerce of distant productions, have given them at the same time the power of exercising, on the sale of these productions, towards the consumers, an oppressive monopoly. This opinion, in all probability, took its rise from the declamations and complaints of those who were roused by an interest of a very different kind, the loss of an active share in maritime commerce: it became strengthened by political animosities, national prejudices, hostile artifices, and the constant and uniform efforts of the majority of modern writers. It received some colour

from the coincidence of an advance in the price of those commodities, with the epoch of the preponderance, or exclusive dominion, as they are pleased to call it, of the English. Lastly, it appeared fully confirmed by that captious and apparently decisive argument, that as, in a private market, the price depends on the concurrence of the vendors, and a monopoly necessarily introduces dearness; so, in the general market of Europe, the concurrence of nations who vend colonial produce, ought always to diminish the price, whilst, on the contrary, the monopoly of a single nation must be always attended with an arbitrary advance.

But with whatever degree of favour this opinion has been received, I apprehend the following reasons will demonstrate its falsity.

First, I hold it impossible that there ever should subsist in any commercial country such a general agreement, as is indispensably necessary, by the aid of a monopoly, to fix an arbitrary price on any particular objects of traffic. A commercial nation is nothing but a collection of commercial individuals, each of whom in his commercial relations with the purchaser, whether he be a foreigner or not, follows the maxims prescribed by his immediate and particular interest. Every individual is the natural rival of all the rest. Should a hundred individuals form an union for the purpose of establishing in every market an arbitrary and artificial price, another hundred would imme-

diately spring up, who, for the sake of procuring an extensive sale, would content themselves with the least possible profit, would establish the true price, formed by the original value of the commodity, the expense of carriage, and the profit of sale ; and thus destroy the effect of this dreaded coalition. A monopoly exercised by all the individuals composing a nation that sells, against all the purchasers, and in all the markets of Europe, is a chimera, which will disappear before the first serious examination. Nay, should the government of any commercial nation be so blind and senseless as to deliver all the branches of its external commerce into the hands of companies vested with privileges and monopoly ; even in that case, unlikely as it is, I maintain it would be impossible for these privileged companies to hold up, for any length of time, a price arbitrarily established. But even on this supposition, improbable as it is, a prodigious contraband traffic would immediately take place, and compel the monopolizers either to reduce their price or relinquish their trade. I am fully convinced, that, in the strict acceptation of the term, there exists no such thing as a monopoly in the commercial connexions that subsist among nations.

Secondly, The advance in price, which, since these last ten years, has taken place in the commodities both of the East and West Indies, may be so satisfactorily explained from a variety of obvious causes, that it is something more than

useless to search for reasons in the chimera of a national monopoly. If independently of this advance, which has arisen out of the nature of things, and merely kept pace with the extraordinary demand on all objects of consumption whatever ; if, I say, independently of this, we consider the peculiar circumstances, which, dating from the revolution, and the war which followed it, must necessarily have had an effect on the price of distant productions ; the devastation of some of the principal colonies the suspension of industry, and the ruin of capital in so many countries, and the inevitable calamities falling on the productive industry of every nation ; the dangers of navigation, which every where, though in a less proportion amongst the greater maritime powers, have raised the rates of insurance, and diminished the profit of the merchant ; lastly, that vast mass of real riches, which, as well in Great Britain as on the continent, has been taken from productive labour : I say, when all these circumstances are fairly weighed, we shall admit that the dearness of colonial productions is an effect and result flowing from them. The profit which the English merchant, taken individually, draws from the sale of colonial productions is certainly not more considerable than it was twenty years ago ; there is indeed reason to suspect that it is less. Twice, during the course of the war, the West India merchants in London

were obliged to have recourse to Government for considerable sums to assist them in their embarrassments. The East India Company, instead of accumulating treasures, has increased its debt. Thus those two classes of men, who, on the supposition of extraordinary gains arising from a monopoly, would have had the exclusive, or, at least, the principal advantage, have with difficulty maintained their original grant.

Thirdly, If it could be of any importance for the European consumers to receive these commodities from one nation, rather than from another, that could arise merely from the superior industry or wealth of the nation which disposed of them; since such a nation, all other circumstances being equal, would be enabled to sell them at a cheaper rate. For the larger the capitals are, which are employed on any branch of industry, the greater the activity, address, and experience of the undertaking, the more abundant will be the produce. In proportion as the object in view is attained with greater facility and certainty, the sacrifice and the risk will be less, and the equivalent paid by the purchaser will be proportionably moderate. The productions of both Indies, when exposed in the markets of Europe, may be considered as effects and results of the navigation, capital, activity, and industry of the nations concerned in that trade. Under this view, no people can stand a competition with England; no people can produce, carry, and consequently sell at

a lower price. So long as other nations shall not possess the advantages and means which may enable them to sell at the same moderate price as England, the exclusive commerce of that country, or, as it is falsely called, its monopoly, will continue to be an obvious advantage to the European consumer. To me this appears so clear, so thoroughly established upon true grounds, and on the most simple principles of public economy, that the most subtle sophistry may be challenged to frame objections against it.

Let us consider then what results from our examination of the second of the principal charges against England, namely, the monopoly of colonial establishments, and the monopoly of the colonial trade.

First, Before the French revolution England possessed no exclusive dominion either in the East or West Indies, or America. So little was this the case in the West Indies and America, those important theatres of European activity, that she did not even support a leading character. In the East Indies she may simply be considered as possessing an ascendancy, since the Dutch, French, Portuguese, Danes, &c. had all settlements and territories of greater or less value.

Secondly, The territorial dominion of Great Britain has increased since the French revolution in every part of the world: in the East Indies it has become nearly exclusive; in the West Indies

and America it can hardly be said to have acquired an ascendancy.

Thirdly, That neither the territorial possessions, which England enjoyed before the revolution, nor all her conquests since, could establish an exclusive commerce of colonial productions, or are sufficient to explain it. If it exists, it is owing to other causes. Amongst these may be numbered the advantages peculiar to England, which are independent of any political event, and whose use can never become a subject of reproach. The other causes are those shocks and calamities felt through Europe, of which England was not the author, from which she has derived advantages merely accidental, and for which she has paid dear in other respects.

Fourthly, This exclusive commerce, on a supposition that it were possessed by England, would be directly prejudicial to those states only which had before taken an active part in maritime commerce. It could not become so to the other states, those who swell the list of consumers, but as it raised the price of the commodities which were wanted. Now, since it cannot happen but that, under all circumstances, the English are both able and willing to indulge the purchasers with the most favourable terms, it follows that this execrated monopoly of colonial productions, which in other cases might be an object of indifference to the consumers, became, in the present, a peculiar advantage to them.

Not that I look upon it as a matter of unconcern to Europe, whether the states which have so deeply suffered by the revolution, should resume their former energy, or continue in their present inactivity. But certainly it is her true interest that all the parts of which she is composed, that all her states, cultivators, manufacturers, merchants, should respectively attain the greatest possible degree of perfection. It is her interest that every nation should partake of the general riches of the universe, consequently of all colonial productions, and of the commerce of both Indies, in a proportion, if possible, adapted to their respective situations, wants, dispositions, faculties, and the most complete display of their productive powers.

Viewing things from this elevated point of view, not only every lover of humanity, interested in the general welfare, but every politician, who traces the connexion of those laws which form the general economy of the universe, will devoutly wish peace may restore every maritime nation to the enjoyment of its just measure of dominion, commerce, and colonial industry. But let not this great and extended view of the subject be confounded with that partial and contracted one, which is made the foundation of all the murmurs against the commercial superiority of England. To the former liberal consideration the authors of those murmurs are completely strangers. Could it have been communicated to the

multitude, could they but once have suspected it, there had at once been an end of all the declamations against England.

### III. *The Monopoly of English Manufactures.*

Important as the colonial commerce is in itself, it is still but a secondary object with respect to other branches of English industry. If the power and riches of that state depend upon commerce, it is unquestionable that its internal manufactures may be reckoned its most abundant source.

Having endeavoured to explain in what the monopoly of the colonial commerce of England consists, and how far its superiority in that branch may be considered as tyrannical, or even as prejudicial to other states, it only remains now to inquire whether the same reproaches against the commerce of English manufactures have a better foundation.

Mr. H. and a thousand writers before him, represent the preference enjoyed by English manufactures in the markets of Europe, as a mark of the degradation and slavery of all other nations. According to their account, the vast riches of England are founded upon the impoverishment of Europe: that in proportion as these riches are increased, the power increases with it to rivet those heavy and disgraceful chains, with which every government and every people is oppressed. The extinction of industry leads to the extinction of independence; the commercial de-

potism of England becomes a foundation for her political despotism, and she extends from day to day her system of dominion and tyranny over Europe.

A slight analysis of this description will prove that some things advanced are false, others asserted without proof, and several totally contradictory. The marked, the almost exclusive preference, enjoyed by English commodities in the European markets, is the effect, not of constraint, but of choice. This favour was freely granted, and is freely continued. How, in fact, should it be otherwise? What means has England to force the introduction and sale of her wares, in a single market of the continent? If such success has proved in other nations the extinction of their industry, and is to be considered as a pledge of their dependance and disgrace, how happens it that they should so quietly submit to the yoke, especially when it was in their power at a moment's notice to throw it off? And if we suppose the people blinded by an inexplicable fatality to their own interests, surely their respective governments must be sufficiently enlightened to discover and repulse so dreadful an evil. How happens it that so plain an argument, level to the meanest capacities, has failed to correct those errors on this subject, which the spirit of sophistry has been employed to circulate and maintain?

How is it that English industry, thus hated and vilified, the pretended cause of the decline and

misfortunes of Europe, should be permitted the peaceable enjoyment of the prerogative and advantages once acquired ? Why do not subjects and sovereigns unite to banish for ever English commodities from their country, and burst, with becoming courage, these disgraceful bonds ? I answer, the reason is, that, for want of clear and precise ideas of their true interest, they suffer themselves to be governed by a confused sentiment of advantage ; a sort of instinct, which is sufficient to dispel all the monsters and chimeras raised by ignorance and passion. This instinct shall be presently explained.

The preponderance of English industry in Europe, like that of their colonial commerce, arises from two causes, of which one is positive, the other negative.

The positive cause lies in the intrinsic superiority of the produce of English industry : in other words, in the sum of all those advantages through which England is enabled to prepare at a less expense those commodities which other countries prepare at a greater, or to deliver articles of a better construction at the same expense : these are advantages by which she finds herself consequently able to sell at an easier price, merchandises equally good, and at a proportionably low rate, the prime articles of her manufacture. The causes of this positive and intrinsic superiority of English wares are well known :—the perfection to which every species of manual labour is

brought, the great excellence and multiplicity of the instruments and tools employed in handicraft, the laborious and enterprising spirit of the people: lastly, a tendency in the national manners and character, constitution and laws, to procure and preserve those precious advantages.

The negative cause consists in the relative weakness, negligence, and defective administration of those nations, who, from the little care they have taken to cultivate their own industry, are placed in a state of dependance on foreign industry.

The state of English manufactures in the best cultivated countries of Europe, where the native industry has reached a high pitch of excellence, is an effect and an example of the *positive* superiority of their commodities. Hence they have opened for themselves markets in Germany, several states of the North, and in France before and since the revolution.

Their success in Portugal, and more particularly in Russia, is founded on what I call the negative cause of their superiority. In the latter country the English are not only merchants, but manufacturers. English capitals are employed, and English undertakers and workmen conduct the home manufactures to their own particular advantage. I do not say, if Portugal and Russia were to cultivate their own manufactures with superior industry, that *therefore* they would exclude England from their markets; were they

as distinguished in that respect as France and Germany, still they would always give, like them, a preference to English manufactures when they surpassed their own in intrinsic excellence. But this exclusive occupancy, this co-operation of the English with the interior industry of the country, this augmentation and surplusage of their superiority, prove incontrovertibly the existence of notorious defects in a government which could offer them such signal advantages.

As far as the manufactures of England depend upon positive advantages, their good quality and their low price, this circumstance may be considered as clear and absolute profit, not only to England, but to all other countries, and to civil society in general. It becomes the advantage of every individual in Europe to provide himself with articles of consumption, where he finds them at once of the best quality, and at the most reasonable price. It becomes the advantage of every individual in Europe, which, left to his instinctive feelings, he will quickly find, to purchase the same articles cheap abroad, rather than dear at home; and what shall we say, if the commodities which are thus purchased cheaper prove at the same time of superior quality? The general advantage is but the collection and sum of private advantages. The true interest of a state in all cases consists in procuring every object of consumption at the least possible expense of power, capital, and labour; because they can then be em-

ployed for the attainment of other necessary objects; and after that to the augmentation of its permanent capital, and the increase of its productive forces. From the moment its external commerce is framed upon this plan (and in the natural course of things there is no other external commerce), it may be considered in all circumstances as useful and advantageous. It is possible the interest of some particular classes may appear in opposition to these maxims: but that of the mass, nay, that of each of the individual members of that class, is inseparably connected with these maxims. Let manufacturers and merchants, and those politicians who have believed them upon their word, represent as they please, that any one nation is impoverished by the importation of the manufactures of another, plain good sense will tell us, and it will be confirmed by an attentive view of the sources of public prosperity, that all commerce which tends to the actual protection of any branch of human industry, is always, and wherever it takes place, advantageous to all who participate in it, to the purchasers as well as to the venders. It is those manufacturers, merchants, and credulous politicians, who have given the signal for those violent outcries which have resounded through Europe against the tyranny of English commerce. The enemies of England have skilfully availed themselves of this movement, which so completely answered their purpose. What the former called dependance, the

latter termed a disgraceful slavery ; what the one deplored at worst as a fatal blindness, the other held out as the last stage of decay and humiliation. Ignorance created these chimeras ; passion and the spirit of intrigue diffused them over Europe ; and the want of just notions on the fundamental truths of public economy, in an age in other respects so enlightened, and so proud of its knowledge, assured the victory to ignorance and passion.

As far as the pre-eminence of English industry depends upon the weakness of other states, on the neglect of their proper industry, and the defects of their administration and interior police, so far it is prejudicial, not only to the country immediately affected, but to all other states, and in its last result to all civil society ; since Europe taken collectively demands from each of the states, of which it is formed, the greatest possible exertion of its respective powers and faculties. If Russia and Portugal employ English capitals and English workmen in their home manufactures, this circumstance, so little natural, implies some defect in the system of their industry, or the entire inutility and worthlessness of the whole system. Were these defects made to disappear, not only the nations which are immediately interested would derive advantage from it, but, in virtue of that concatenation which connects the productive forces of Europe, this advantage would extend to all the nations of Europe.

Till this radical improvement shall take place, it is evidently and incontestably advantageous, not only to those countries which are in want of foreign labour and capital, but for the general system of European industry, that the defects should be made good by the ability and resources of England. Would not the evil be infinitely greater, if these fields of human industry, fertilized and improved by English industry, were to lie totally barren and uncultivated? That would be a positive, this is but a relative evil; it is an evil only on the supposition of the existence of others still greater; in every other respect it is an advantage.

On these grounds it becomes easy to decide what there is real or chimerical in the complaints against English superiority, and what is pernicious and salutary in the means by which a remedy is hoped.

The complaints against the imperfection of internal industry in those countries where that of England flourishes, against the defects of administration, against the voluntary disability to which they condemn themselves: these complaints, under a certain view, are well founded; under another view, they are false; and in all respects are grossly unjust, considered as grievances against England. They are founded in this respect, that the circumstance of the inhabitants of a country not employing the means that nature puts into their hands, and neglecting the internal sources

of prosperity, arises from the neglect or misapprehension of public economy, which, under all possible circumstances, must be considered as a serious evil. They are false under this consideration, that, in a state thus administered, foreign industry becomes necessary to supply the want of domestic, and consequently an evident advantage to the very nation that stands in need of foreign succour. They are unjust when applied to England, because she cannot be made responsible for the indolence, inactivity, and want of cultivation in other countries, for the obstacles which nature opposes to the progress of their industry, nor for the defects of their administrations. Never can it be imputed as a crime to England, that she endeavours by legitimate means to extend the empire of her industry in all places which appear proper for its exertions. So far from it, that whenever the excess of foreign industry comes in aid to the defect of domestic in any country, it is not only a benefit to the state in want of this surplus, but an advantage to the general system.

Thus, whenever the complaints against the English are directed against the positive perfection of their industry, they are not only unjust, but, under every point of view, totally destitute of foundation. Regarded under the more elevated views of public economy, this positive perfection of English industry is a common benefit to all nations. Europe is essentially interested in having in her centre a country, where commerce, and all

the arts depending upon it, have attained the highest degree of perfection; a country which is capable of furnishing the most important articles of consumption, by uniting goodness of quality with cheapness of demand; a country whose activity excites and maintains the activity of all the rest, and whose astonishing industry is continually offering a model to Europe, which does not remain entirely unimitated. Under all these important views, the superior commerce and industry of England is an evident advantage for Europe: how then can they ever afford reasonable grounds for murmur and complaint? By the same estimate we may determine how far the measures, by which, soon or late, the superiority of Great Britain may be reduced, will be pernicious or salutary.

Every *indirect* diminution of that superiority arising from an increase of industry in those states where it had been hitherto neglected, is an advantage, not only to those very states, but it may be considered as an increase to the general prosperity of Europe. The loss which England may sustain by such a diminution of superiority in her commerce and industry, will never be any thing but an apparent loss, while the advantage which other nations will derive from it is positive and essential.

Every *direct* diminution of the same superiority, arising from the immediate decline of the productive powers of Great Britain, is a loss not

only to this country, but to the general prosperity of Europe. The advantages enjoyed by other nations from this diminution would be only apparent, while the loss to England, and, with her, to all other states, would be positive and essential.

It is in the greatest possible expansion of the productive powers of all nations, the greatest possible extension of their labour, arts, and riches, that the true and paramount interest of Europe, collectively taken, consists. If those countries which have hitherto been indebted to foreign hands for the cultivation of their natural productions, should call in aid their proper industry, there will result from this happy revolution a positive augmentation to the general produce of labour.

Nor will the foreign industry, displaced by the employment of native labour, be lost, because it is deprived of one theatre of its activity. Soon would it find another, call into use productions hitherto unknown, and add a new source to the general riches. Hence the loss of the state most advanced in industry, by the rise of a state hitherto inferior, can never be other than apparent. That in this quarter of the globe the greatest possible activity should prevail, and the highest possible prosperity be attained, is equally the interest of England and of Europe. It is not from the degradation and impoverishment of other nations, but from their progress in every branch of social cultivation and public prosperity, that England

must derive its best and greatest riches. Should she in any country, by craft or violence, repress the growth of its native industry, then, and then only, would she deserve those reproaches of oppression, which are now levelled against her, destitute of foundation: then would she stand in direct opposition to the legitimate wishes and views, rights and interests of all other nations; then would she really be the tyrant, the common enemy, the scourge of Europe.

## CHAP. V.

*View of the State of France since the Revolution, and of the Alliances she has contracted, and is disposed to contract.*

A FULL and complete answer being thus given to the groundless and clamorous charges against Great Britain, it seems, in conclusion, proper to consider what is the real situation of her great enemy, and whether what is fabled of the one, be not seriously true of the other. I shall, therefore, collect and abridge Mr. Gentz's sentiments of the state of France since the revolution; to which I shall add his view of the alliances she has formed, and is disposed to form, that an idea may be conceived of what Europe has to expect from her dreadful and overwhelming preponderance.

It is judiciously observed, that all political or diplomatic knowledge is founded upon two bases —the real, actual, and, if it may be so expressed, the physical state of countries; and the temper, views, and interests of those called to their respective administration. Of these two, the first is the most certain, the most important, and the most dignified. In the present view, the latter is totally disclaimed, and all arguments and con-

clusions grounded upon the real situation and genuine power of France. Thus it becomes a matter of indifference whether its government is in the hands of a Bonaparte, a Robespierre, or a Bourbon.

France was in a state of perfect security before the revolution, as has been already observed; but her conquests have in this respect added so essentially to her strength, that she may now defy the efforts of united Europe. Before the revolution, whenever she was led out of her boundaries by any ambitious projects, more than one power was able to repress and restrain her. Austria, Prussia, and England, separately or by combination, always obliged France to maintain the due political equilibrium. Nay, the independent states by whom she was surrounded, were themselves able to support the shock of a first attack, and gave the greater powers an opportunity of coming forward in support of the common cause. This system is entirely destroyed.

The first guarantee against France for the north of Germany, and consequently for the north of Europe, was the independence of Holland. More than once, unassisted and alone, she had resisted the whole power of France. Since the peace of Utrecht she had, indeed, sensibly declined; but still, by an alliance with other states, she was always before the revolution adequate to the maintenance of her rank and influence. The revolution has effaced her from the

list of independent powers, and from the year 1795 she may be considered as a province of France. Should any favourable event hereafter occur, she never can become again what she has once been; her internal strength is exhausted, her frontier towns taken from her, and the incorporation of Belgium with the French republic cuts off all future hope. In every future war, Holland may be considered as a portion of the French territory. The guarantee which Europe found in the independence of Holland is lost, and her independence for ever destroyed.

The second guarantee for the north of Europe was the Austrian Low Countries. These were so distant from the centre of the Austrian government, so expensive in the administration, and so generally made the seat of war, that it might have been wished they had passed under the dominion of some other power: so long as they were in the hands of any other power than those of France, they necessarily proved a bulwark of the north of Europe. It was no slight difference for France, at the commencement of a war, to open the campaign on the Maese, or on the ground of her ancient frontiers, to be obliged to spend a year or two in the conquest of the Low Countries, or to be able to penetrate immediately into the heart of Germany.

The third guarantee was that considerable extent of territory situated between the Rhine and the ancient French frontiers. Here were

found two of the strongest fortresses in Europe, a variety of military positions, and ample room to receive and repress the impetuosity of a first attack from France.

The value of these three guarantees was enhanced by this consideration, that they protected those portions of the Empire which were most liable to be attacked. Though the revolution shews that no bulwark, natural or artificial, can resist French enterprise, and the south of Germany was found to be open to an invader, as well as the north, still it is incontestable, that the country between the Mayne and the Alps is of much more difficult access than the country between the Mayne and the Baltic; exclusive of the ancient provinces of Prussia, there is scarcely in the latter quarter a tenable post. A battle or two in the open field must in a very great measure decide its fate. The south of Germany, since the revolution, in losing Switzerland has lost its bulwark. No longer is the sacred neutrality of that country respected. It becomes an extensive camp for France, whose position enables it to overawe the south of Germany. No longer is there any security for Suabia, Bavaria, or the advanced provinces of Austria. At the first signal of hostility, the French armies will be able to spread themselves over those now unprotected countries.

The King of Sardinia, with propriety named the guardian of the Alps, held in the strong passes of those mountains, the keys of Italy. So

long as his power subsisted, neither France nor Austria could entertain any reasonable expectation of the conquest of Italy, since he would naturally and invariably side with the power which undertook its defence. That barrier is thrown down. Italy can be considered as little else than a province of France. She reigns from the summit of the Alps to the Straits of Messina; and should the consular power determine to-morrow to constitute Italy into one republic, or unite its provinces to France under the name of a department, the mighty change is effected by the issue of a decree.

Since the year 1762, a close connexion has existed between France and Spain: the latter power, from an inferiority of strength, may be considered, in some measure, as in a state of dependency; but till the revolution took place, she never failed to speak at least an independent language, and her treasures and forces were not at the absolute disposal of her ally. The case is now altered. Not a single trace of liberty can be found in the Spanish government. The very extinction of the monarchy, were it so ordered, must take place: and from the year 1795 it might be truly said, “There are no longer any Pyrenees.” The expense of conquest is spared, the conquest itself is completed, and Spain is no longer an independent power. It may now be truly said, that France has no longer any frontiers. Whatever surrounds her may be considered as her proper territory, or

may become so whenever she pleases. Spain, Italy, and Germany, now lie open and unprotected. Their best security is placed in the moderation of the French government ; consequently they have merely a personal guarantee, of which any day or hour may deprive them, and there would then remain for the west of Europe only one law, one dominion.

Nor does it appear that this colossal power is built upon a slight and tottering foundation. Her military grandeur is identified with her civil and political existence. The revolution was born in storms, cradled in adversity, and has received a military education. War was her passion, her ambition : every thing was sacrificed to military glory. This sentiment remains, and will remain. Her interior constitution depends upon the co-operation of her military forces. Whether France is considered as desirous of preserving that interior constitution, or retaining her external ascendancy, her armies are the first and last object of political calculation. Never must France cease to be the first military power in Europe. The melancholy question shall not be here agitated, whether there be at this moment a single state competent to meet her in arms. But it seems little dubious, that no successful contest is likely to take place, nor is any reasonable hope suggested of the restoration of any portion of the ancient federative system, except by an extensive and well-compacted alliance. This alliance must

comprise Austria and Prussia, perhaps both. Russia, from its distance, can never be effective in any other capacity than as an auxiliary : England herself is in the same predicament. France might extend her conquests over the whole of the continent, and England be compelled to remain an inglorious spectator of her dangerous acquisitions. It does not appear that either Austria or Prussia is singly able to offer a vigorous, permanent, and successful resistance. An effective opposition might undoubtedly be made by the junction of these two great powers, aided by England and Russia. But then, it would no longer be an alliance, but a coalition, such as we have already had the misfortune to see, ill-compacted, temporary, insignificant, and inadequate. Besides, from the old enmity long rankling between Austria and Prussia, and the actual opposition in which they are placed in the Empire, no reasonable hopes can be entertained of a firm, zealous, and effectual union. Hence, then, arises, upon the whole, an indifferent, not to say a melancholy prospect, of the restoration of the federative system and political balance of Europe.

Mr. Gentz holds himself authorized from the above statement to draw the following conclusions :

First, That France, by the extension of her territory, and the increase of her influence over Holland, Italy, and Switzerland, by the absolute inability of her neighbours to defend them-

selves from her attacks, and lastly, by the augmentation of her military force beyond the proportion of her territorial aggrandizement, has attained a degree of power, to which no state in Europe can possibly be compared.

Secondly, That this elevation of France has so deranged the ancient political equilibrium, that even amongst the great states of the continent, no one, unsupported by the others, can balance her preponderancy; that, consequently, she may at pleasure abuse her superiority; and an alliance furnishes the only resource against the threatened dangers.

Thirdly, That from the geographical, military, and political situation of France, it is impossible that any efficacious league can be formed against her, without Austria or Prussia, or both, taking a part in it.

Fourthly, From the actual situation of France, and her peculiar advantages, it results that every league, which Austria should form without Prussia, or, reciprocally, Prussia without Austria, with one or more of the other powers of Europe, would fail to restore the equilibrium with France, or at best could only diminish her disproportionate preponderance.

Fifthly, That, therefore, no plan for the maintenance of a balance in Europe, can be efficacious, unless Austria and Prussia both concur in it.

Sixthly, That an efficacious union between these two powers is a matter of extreme difficulty

to accomplish ; and as, by its nature, it could only be temporary, it is unreasonable to expect any thing from it, but a limited and precarious success.

Seventhly and lastly, That there is not in the whole extent of the federative relations of Europe, any alliance, properly so called, which can counterbalance the power of France. It is only by the delicate and dangerous mode of coalition, that a counterpoise can be found: and neither theory nor practice will justify the expediency and efficacy of this measure.

Our author here considers what the friends of France may urge in reply to this opinion of the greatness of her power, and the extent of the danger of Europe ; and states with great fairness and candour whatever can be plausibly urged in favour of the republic—her well-known pacific sentiments, her avowed intention to cultivate commercial pursuits and political economy, her interest in not extending her frontiers, and closing the career of conquest, and her anxious desire to see the creation of a new system of public right and a new balance of power. But he shews, that in no one instance can any dependance be placed, on hopes and assurances like these ; and in their refutation he takes the most general grounds, disclaims all personal considerations, and argues from principles, maxims, and data, in which all parties must concur, and to which Mr. Hauterive himself could hardly form an objection.

The nature of the alliances France has made, and is disposed to make, holds out no grounds of hope or confidence. If in Mr. Hauterive's hypothesis we are to search for the base of her connexions with Europe, nothing like a federative system can exist any longer. The object of all alliances to be contracted in future is twofold: in peace to guarantee the existing connexions, in war to reduce within bounds agreeable to France, the maritime ascendancy of England. But surely it stands to reason that the connexions and relations which are to be guaranteed ought to be accurately defined and carefully ascertained. If, on an impartial view, they appear of a beneficial tendency, and favourable to the maintenance of the general equilibrium, there can be no doubt but they deserve the most solid guarantee they can receive. But assume a supposition contrary to this, conceive them of a nature diametrically opposite, it would necessarily be an act of folly or madness to patronize or protect them. A state, like France, that has extended her empire far and wide, and enjoys an universal preponderance, may well wish to have her existing relations guaranteed, because in that she finds security to her possession and permanancy to her power; but the sooner such connexions are dissolved, and a proper equilibrium is restored and established, the better for every other state, whatever its views, situation, and power.

The exaggerated ascendancy of the maritime powers, which all the continental powers are called upon to restrain, is a vague insignificant phrase, liable to be construed by the predominant power agreeably to its interest and pleasure. It is absurd too, because no idea purely relative can ever furnish ground for an absolute precept. That surely must be a singular principle, which establishes the necessity of every alliance amongst the continental powers being directed against the maritime states. Before any exaggerated ascendancy is imputed to them, it becomes necessary to examine and appreciate their real and genuine influence: when that is satisfactorily proved to swell beyond its due bounds, then is the time for united efforts to repress and restrain them.

Let us, in place of these arbitrary maxims, substitute a plain and wholesome rule: every state, in the choice of its alliances, ought to have in view, not only its true and permanent interest (in contradistinction to a temporary one), but at the same time the support of the general balance of power; that being ever considered as in unison with the true and permanent interest of every state in particular. It is at the same time equally true, that practical politics must decide upon the proper means: the solution of this problem does not fall within the reach of general principles.

Hence then results a truth no less important than melancholy, that every derangement of the federal system, arising from the exclusive pre-

ponderance of any one of the component parts, not only destroys the political balance previously established, but opposes in addition almost insurmountable obstacles to the formation of new and salutary alliances. Apply this to the present state of affairs, and we shall find that the balance is not only lost for the present, but becomes every day more difficult to restore. If France allies herself with powers of the first consequence, her preponderance is at once obviously increased, and her will becomes a more indisputable law. Should she connect herself with the inferior and secondary states, she secures at once their absolute dependence, while she dissolves their consistency. Of those who happen not to be comprised in an alliance, some will in due course of time draw near her by formal alliances, or by a neutrality, often more serviceable and effective. Take a supposition, however unlikely, that all states should concur in a common alliance against her, we are then presented with a second coalition; exposed to all the difficulties of that species of association, and sacrificing the permanent interest of all parties to an object merely temporary, and which it is uncertain whether they ever will attain.

These reflections will leave us nothing to observe in the actual state of Europe, on the relation which exists between France and her allies, nor on the prospect of a restoration of the federative system. Mr. Hauterive mentions the alliances which France has concluded with Spain, Holland,

and Genoa (he omits Switzerland and the Cisalpine republic), as the first foundations of a new political code. Such were those which Sicily, Greece, Asia Minor, and Egypt, contracted with the Roman people. If these are to become the model of her other alliances, if the actual situation of Switzerland, Holland, Italy, and Spain, is to become the lot of the other allies of France, it may well be a matter of doubt whether her boasted friendship is not more fatal than her professed and inveterate hostility.

In fact, the threat Mr. Hauterive holds out, that, in case of obstinacy and refractoriness, France will be obliged to compel them to the adoption of measures calculated to complete her own system, can be considered as nothing else but a declaration of war.

This is a melancholy picture of the state of France, of the alliances she has formed, and those she projects; but it is drawn with truth. Let not Europe, in future, be taught to catch the alarm at the commercial and colonial greatness of England, but contemplate with dread that power which seriously threatens it with the gigantic danger of universal monarchy !





